

Destination 2020

"CHARTING A COURSE TO ALAMANCE COUNTY'S FUTURE."



- *Orderly Growth*
- *Economic Development*
- *Transportation*
- *Education*
- *Utility Infrastructure*
- *Quality of Life*

Prepared by:
DESTINATION 2020 PLANNING WORKGROUP

Technical Assistance:
Alamance County Planning Department
and
Glenn Harbeck Associates

Adopted By:
THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
April 21, 2003

Alamance County, North Carolina



Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan

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Table of Contents

Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic

Introduction	Intro-1
Growth Factors Analysis	GF-1
Vision Statements	V-1
Policy Section	PS-1
1. Preferred Growth Pattern	PS-2
Policy Statements.....	PS-3
2. Agricultural and Rural Area Preservation	PS-3
Policy Statements.....	PS-5
3. Housing and Neighborhood Development	PS-6
Policy Statements.....	PS-14
4. Commercial and Office Development	PS-15
Policy Statements.....	PS-16
5. Industrial Development	PS-17
Policy Statements.....	PS-19
6. Transportation	PS-19
Policy Statements.....	PS-29
7. Water and Sewer Services	PS-30
Policy Statements.....	PS-35
8. School Facilities	PS-36
Policy Statements.....	PS-40
9. Solid Waste Management	PS-40
Policy Statements.....	PS-43
10. Parks and Recreation	PS-43
Policy Statements.....	PS-50
11. Paying for Infrastructure and Services	PS-50
Policy Statements.....	PS-58
12. Air Quality	PS-58
Policy Statements.....	PS-61
13. Water Quality	PS-61
Policy Statements.....	PS-67
14. Economic Development	PS-68
Policy Statements.....	PS-74
15. Public Safety	PS-75
Policy Statements.....	PS-82
16. Health Care	PS-83
Policy Statements.....	PS-87
17. Services to Senior Citizens	PS-88
Policy Statements.....	PS-92
18. Community Appearance	PS-92
Policy Statements.....	PS-96
19. Historic Preservation	PS-97
Policy Statements.....	PS-104
20. Cultural Diversity and Acceptance	PS-105
Policy Statements.....	PS-107
Implementation Actions	IA-1

Introduction



- *Orderly Growth*
 - *Economic Development*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Education*
 - *Utility Infrastructure*
 - *Quality of Life*
-



Introduction

Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan

Background

How did the Destination 2020 Strategic Plan come about?

In the Spring of 2001, work began in earnest on the preparation of a Strategic Plan, as authorized the Board of County Commissioners of Alamance County. The purpose of the plan was to guide the future growth and development of the county and to help set priorities for county government in responding to the needs of future growth.

Why do we need a Strategic Plan for Alamance County?

During the 1990's, Alamance County's population grew from about 108,000 to over 130,000, for an increase of over 22,000 people or 21%. State demographers project that the county will add 22,000 more by 2010 and still another 23,000 by 2020. These additional people represent more children to educate, more cars on area roads, more opportunities for crime, etc. Each year, the County Commissioners must make difficult decisions about how to allocate the county budget to address these competing needs. The Strategic Plan is intended to help guide those difficult decisions.

Why is it called the "Destination 2020" Strategic Plan?

To do the right things in the short term requires a long range perspective. An important element of the plan, therefore, is to establish a "County Vision"-- and then figure out what needs to be done to make that vision become a reality. Some actions will be short term, on the order of 1-3 years; others will be long term, more like 5-10 years. But the important thing is to identify the full range of potential actions, and then get started on them as soon as possible after the plan is completed.

Who was charged with responsibility for preparing the Strategic Plan?

The County Commissioners appointed a “Work Group” made up of **20 citizens** from across the county, to guide the preparation of the Strategic Plan. The names of the Work Group members are listed below:

- Brice Moore, Chairman- Mebane
- Walter Britt- Gibsonville
- Jay Burke- Graham
- Ray Cobb- Pleasant Grove
- David Cooper- Elon
- Lillie Enoch- Pleasant Grove
- N.N. Fleming, III- Haw River
- Ike Holt- Albright Township/Graham
- Jane Iseley- MortonTownship/Ossipee
- Samuel Isley- Patterson Township/Alamance
- Keith Kime- Thompson Township/Swepsonville
- Dr. David Kowalski- Elon
- Steve Love- Newlin Township/Snow Camp
- Kelly May- Gibsonville
- Dr. James Merrill- Mebane
- Bill Paris- Elon
- Dr. William Rippy- Elon
- April Turner- Greenlevel
- Helen Walton- Burlington
- Bill Wilson- Burlington

The Work Group, in turn, received technical support from the County Administration, including particularly, the Alamance County Planning Department, working in coordination with a professional planning consultant, Glenn R. Harbeck, AICP.

What did the Strategic Plan Work Group see as its mission for the plan?

Almost from its inception, the Strategic Plan had six focus areas: (1) Orderly Growth (2) Economic Development (3) Transportation, (4) Education (5) Utility Infrastructure and (6) Quality of Life. One of the first tasks the Strategic Plan Work Group undertook was to expand upon and clarify these focus areas by drafting six corresponding *Mission Statements*, set forth as follows:

(1) Orderly Growth

Advanced planning for orderly growth, with proper respect for private property rights, the efficient use of land and other natural resources, the wise use of tax dollars, the cost effective provision of public and private services, and the preservation of farmland, open space and scenic beauty.

(2) Economic Development

An expanding, diversified economic base, with increased career opportunities and higher paying jobs, for both existing residents and for newcomers alike. Investment shall be encouraged in downtowns and existing developed areas, as well as in newly developing areas.

(3) Transportation

A balanced, diversified transportation system, consisting of strong highway, rail and air service linkages, supported by a good network of paved local roads and opportunities for public transit, bicycling, walking and jogging.

(4) Education

A high quality education, conducted in well maintained facilities, having sufficient space for all students, conducive to recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers, and convenient to the

neighborhoods from which they draw, oriented toward up to date job and life skills needed locally and beyond, for the economy of the 21st century.

(5) Utility Infrastructure

The provision of environmentally sound, fiscally self-supporting utility infrastructure, including specifically, centralized water and sewer systems, consistent with good land use and development practices.

(6) Quality Of Life

Attention to other factors which make living and visiting in Alamance County attractive, safe, clean, enjoyable and rewarding: adequate parks, recreation and open spaces, an active cultural, arts, athletic and entertainment community, quality health care and elder care, excellent institutions of higher learning, and an appreciation of history and tradition.

How was the public involved in the planning process?

Starting early in the process, and continuing throughout the planning initiative, the Work Group hosted a number of public input meetings to identify the most important issues facing the county. For example, the Work Group facilitated a meeting of the *City/County Association of Alamance County*, designed to introduce area elected officials to the planning process, and to reach consensus on the most important issues. Similarly, the Work Group facilitated a *countywide public input meeting, open to all county residents*, also with the purpose of identifying the most important issues facing the county.

In addition to these meetings, members of the Work Group went out into the county and met with civic clubs, church groups, farmers associations, and other organizations to ask for their input. Questionnaires were made available at public meetings for attendees to fill out and submit their concerns.

Members of the Work Group appeared on talk radio. News releases were written and submitted to the news media at several points during the process. Space was made available on the County's website specifically for the posting of Destination 2020 documents and to receive public comments. (e-mail: Destination2020@Alamance-nc.com website: www.Alamance-nc.com) In addition, dozens of community leaders and service providers were interviewed to benefit from their knowledge and perspectives.

Finally, the Work Group met once a month at May Memorial Library in Burlington for over a year to discuss citizen concerns and the County's response to those concerns about the future. All Work Group meetings were open to the public.

What were some of the top issues identified by the public?

Interestingly, of some two dozen major issue categories identified early in the planning process, both the elected officials and the general public seemed to agree on the top three: (1) Growth Management, (2) Transportation, and (3) Education. Within these categories, examples of specific concerns included:

- Preserving farm land and green spaces
- Encouraging mixed use developments
- Building new roads and maintaining existing ones
- Proving for better mass transportation
- Putting discipline and prayer back in schools
- Improving existing schools and building new ones

About Strategic Planning

What is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is a systematic way to manage change and create the best possible future. Strategic planning focuses on the allocation of scarce resources to critical issues.

How does strategic planning differ from land use planning?

Land use planning focuses heavily on the physical development of a community, particularly as related to the use of land. While strategic planning may address land use issues, it may also include issues wholly unrelated to the land, such as health care, education, law enforcement, and senior citizens.

What are the functions of the Strategic Plan?

The Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan serves the following primary purposes:

- **Guidance for County Decisions**
The policies and recommended actions of the plan give direction to County government in planning facilities and programs, preparing standards and regulations, working with other local government jurisdictions, and establishing budget and work program priorities.
- **Source of Information**
The Plan and supporting research provides useful information on a number of topics, including the local economy, population, social statistics, education and community facilities.
- **Public Participation and Input**
Public input meetings, work group meetings, publication and review of documents, work sessions, public hearings, and other means seek to ensure that the plan reflects, as accurately as possible, the attitudes and perspectives of the majority of citizens of the County.

What are the parts of the Strategic Plan?

- **Growth Factors Analysis**
The Growth Factors Analysis includes primarily statistical measures concerning Alamance County's population, housing, social statistics, economy, and local government finances. The purpose of the Growth Factors Analysis is to provide a factual basis for understanding the social and economic context for growth in Alamance County.
- **Vision Statements**
The Vision Statements establish a clear picture of where Alamance County would like to be in the year 2020. These Vision Statements lay the foundation for the policies and actions necessary to make this vision a reality. Vision Statements are written as if it is now the year 2020 and we are looking at what has come about as a result of actions identified in the 2020 plan.
- **Policy Statements, Including Supporting Text**
The Policy Statements are the heart of the plan. When adopted by the County Commissioners, they become official policies governing decisions about county services and facilities, including the management of growth and development, water and sewer utilities, transportation, parks and open space, schools, solid waste management, public safety, community appearance, and other factors.
- **Implementation Actions**
The Implementation Actions serve as a "to do list" for County government in support of the Strategic Plan policies. Unlike the policy statements, which should remain relatively constant over time, implementation actions should be updated each year to keep up with changing needs and priorities.

How to Use the Strategic Plan Policies and Actions

The Policies contained in the Strategic Plan have been designed for regular use in guiding public decisions at the County level as well as in providing information for private decisions. As officially adopted policies of the County, they are to be used primarily as a foundation for future decisions on county facilities and services, and in managing growth and development. The following paragraphs detail how various parties involved in County government may use the policies and recommended actions set forth in this Plan.

- ***As Used by the County Staff***

County staff should consult the plan before making decisions about county facilities and services, and in reviewing proposals that may fall under County purview. When presenting proposed changes in services to the County Manager or County Commissioners, any such changes should be evaluated according to their consistency with the adopted policies. County department heads should periodically review the policies and implementation actions, becoming familiar with their content and direction. This is especially important during preparation of the annual work program and proposed budget request for each department.

- ***As Used by Appointed Boards and Commissions***

Before their regular meeting, members of appointed boards and commissions should review proposed agenda items in light of the County's adopted policies. Board members should then make a determination as to the consistency of a particular action or proposal with the County's adopted Strategic Plan Policies. If a board or commission receives a recommendation from County staff on a particular proposal, members should take into account Staff guidance in interpreting the Policies, but may choose to give different weight to different Policies, at times disagreeing with the Staff.

- ***As Used by Alamance County Commissioners***

In their authority to approve the County budget, and in turn, changes in County facilities and services, the County Commissioners have the final word on the actions of Alamance County government. Depending on the situation, the Commissioners may also be directly involved in decisions about land use and development. As customary, the Commissioners should take into account and weigh the interpretation of Policy as provided by all interested parties, the County staff, and appropriate appointed boards and commissions. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a consistent foundation for decision-making.

- ***As Used by the General Public***

Residents of Alamance County can and should reference specific Strategic Plan Policy Statements, when speaking in favor or in opposition to a particular proposal before the County Commissioners or other appointed boards and commissions.

Growth Factors Analysis



- *Orderly Growth*
 - *Economic Development*
 - *Transportation*
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 - *Utility Infrastructure*
 - *Quality of Life*
-



Growth Factors Analysis

Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan

This Growth Factors Analysis includes statistical measures concerning Alamance County's population, housing, social conditions, and local economy. Data concerning community infrastructure such as water and sewer utilities, transportation, school facilities, parks and the like are included in the corresponding policy sections of the plan. The purpose of the Growth Factors Analysis is to provide a factual basis for understanding primarily the social and economic context for growth and change in Alamance County.

Contents

Measures of Population Change, Composition and Distribution

Population Change, Alamance County, 1960-2000 and Projections to 2020	GF-4
Population Growth of Alamance County Compared to the State 1960-2000 and Projections to 2020	GF-5
Population Change Past and Projected, 1970-2000, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC	GF-6
Population Added by Decade, 1970-2000 with Projections to 2020, Alamance, Guilford, and Orange Counties	GF-6
Population Increases in Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1990-2000	GF-6
Population Distribution by Township, Alamance County, 1980-2000	GF-7
Population Increase by Township, Alamance County, 1990-2000	GF-7
Percent of Total Population by Race, Alamance County, 2000	GF-9
Percent of Total Population of Hispanic or Latino Descent, Alamance County, 2000	GF-9
Persons Aged 65 and Over, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996	GF-10
Children/Elderly Persons Per 100 Persons of Working Age, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996	GF-10

Measures of Housing

Housing Type by County, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 2000	GF-11
Housing Types by Township, Alamance County, 2000	GF-11
Mobile Homes as a Percent of Total Housing, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1990 and 2000	GF-12

Mobile Homes as a Percent of All New Homes, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1990-2000	GF-12
Median Value by Housing Type, Owner Occupied, by County Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 2000	GF-12
Percent Housing Units by Tenure by County Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 2000	GF-13
Substandard Housing as a Percent of All Housing Units, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 2000	GF-13
Measures of Social Health	
Low Weight Births, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996	GF-14
Teen Pregnancy Rate, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1993-95	GF-14
Single Parent Families, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1990	GF-14
Child Abuse and Neglect Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC	GF-15
Mental Health Services, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996	GF-15
Non-Elderly Death Rate, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1994-96	GF-15
Youth Before the Court, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1995	GF-16
Prison Admissions, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996	GF-16
Persons Per Physician, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1999	GF-16
Measures of Education	
High School Graduates, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1990	GF-17
High School Drop Out Rate, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1994	GF-17
Average SAT Score, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1995	GF-17
Public School Enrollment, Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 2000	GF-18
Public School Students per 1000 Persons,	

Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1995 GF-18

Measures of Economic Health and Diversity

Median Family Income,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 2000 GF-19

Average Annual Wages,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1999 GF-19

Per Capita Income,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1998 GF-19

Unemployment Rates,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1996, 2000 and 2001 GF-20

Gross Retail Sales Per Capita,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1997 GF-20

Poverty Rate
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1994 GF-21

Medicaid Eligibles,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996 GF-21

Food Stamp Recipients,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1995 GF-21

Percent Employment by Sector, Alamance County, 1999 GF-22

Percent of Non-Agricultural and Salary Jobs in Manufacturing,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1994 GF-22

Total Farm Income,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1998 GF-23

Farm Income % of Total Personal Income,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1998 GF-23

Per Capita Farm Income From Tobacco, Livestock
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996 GF-23

Harvested Cropland as Percent of All Land,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, Plus the State of NC, 1996 GF-23

Travel Employment,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1999 GF-24

Travel Employment as a Percent of Total Employment,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1999 GF-24

Travel Wages Per Capita,
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties, 1999 GF-24

Measures of Population Change, Composition and Distribution

Alamance County grew steadily during most of the second half of the 20th century. One exception was the 1970's, when a very low birth rate and light in-migration contributed to a decade of limited population growth. During the 1990's, however, population levels jumped considerably. Some observers have commented that the rapid population growth of the past decade may be attributed, in part, to the emergence of Alamance County as a bedroom community for Greensboro on the west, and the Research Triangle on the east.

Population projections for the next twenty years show continued population increases of about 22,000 new residents for each of the next two decades.

Population Change in Alamance County 1960-2000 and Projections to 2020

Total Population	
1960	85,674
1970	96,502
1980	99,319
1990	108,213
2000	130,800
2010	152,758
2020	175,620

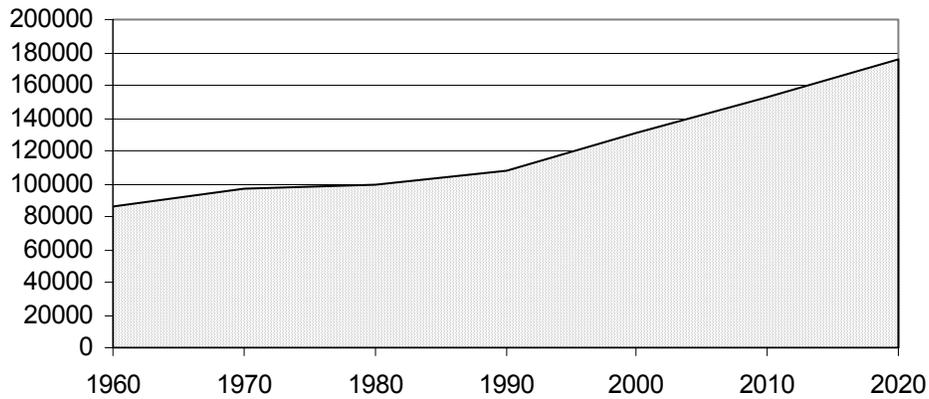
Absolute Increase/Decrease	
1960-1970	10,828
1970-1980	2,817
1980-1990	8,894
1990-2000	22,587
2000-2010	21,958
2010-2020	22,862

Percentage Increase/Decrease	
1960-1970	13%
1970-1980	3%
1980-1990	9%
1990-2000	21%
Projected:	
2000-2010	17%
2010-2020	15%

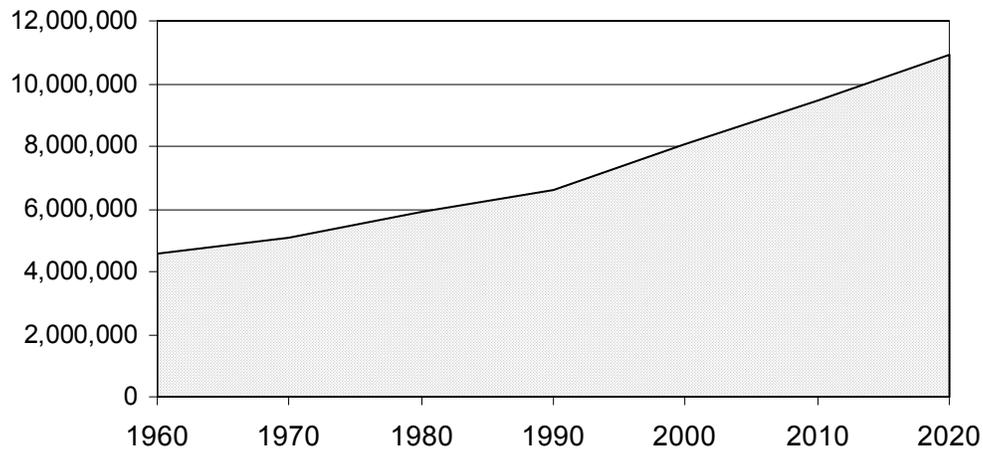
Source: U.S. Census
NC Office of State Planning
Glenn Harbeck Associates

Population of Alamance County Compared to the State of North Carolina

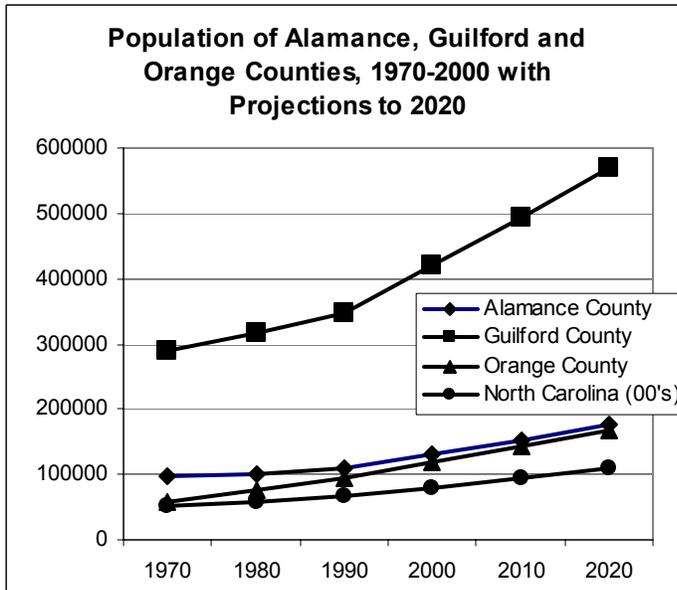
**Population of Alamance County 1960 - 2000
and Projections to 2020**



**Population of North Carolina 1960 -2000
and Projections to 2020**



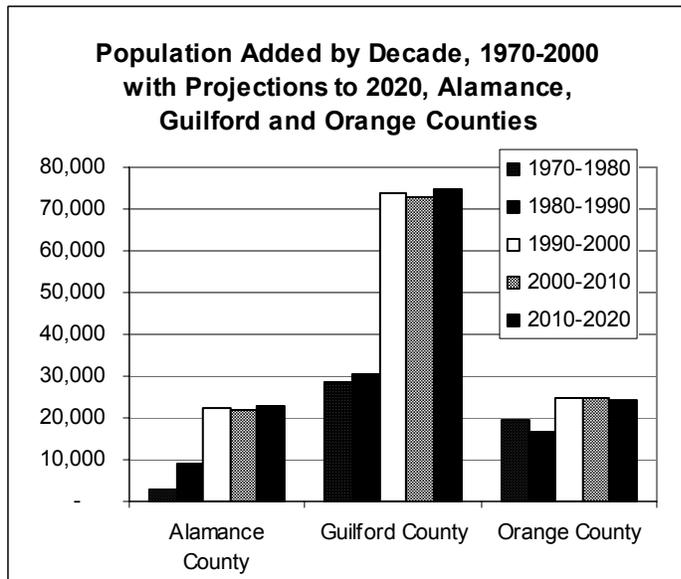
As illustrated in the slopes of the two graphs above, the growth rate of Alamance County has paralleled that of the State for most of the past fifty years. The one exception was the decade of the 1970's, when the County's growth rate clearly lagged behind that of the state. During the 1990's, and for each of the next two decades, however, Alamance County's population growth is expected to match or exceed that of the State.



**Population Change, Past and Projected, 1970-2020
Alamance, Guilford and Orange Counties,
Plus the State of North Carolina**

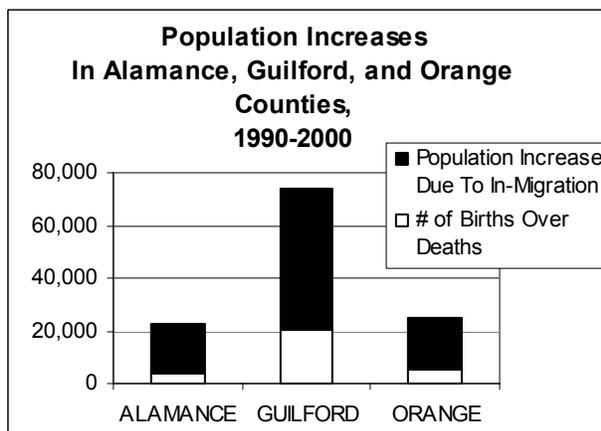
The graphs on this page compare the growth rate of Alamance County to the growth rate of its neighboring counties to the east and west. The first graph also shows the past and projected population growth of North Carolina for the same fifty year period from 1970 to 2020.

Among the three counties, Guilford County, including the rapidly urbanizing Greensboro area, has easily had the fastest growth rate. This pattern is projected to continue for the first two decades of the 21st century.



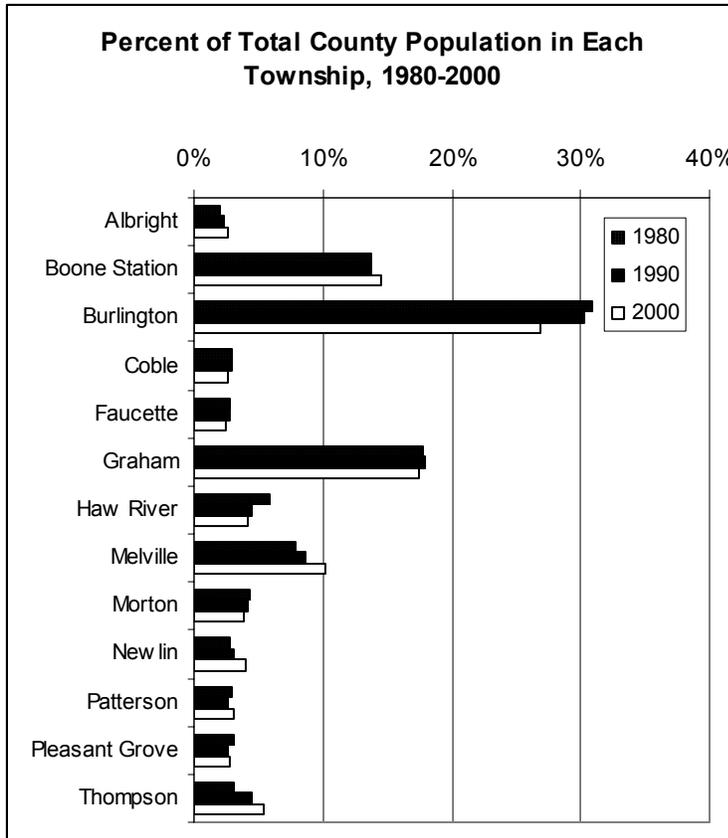
**Population Added by Decade, 1970-2000
with Projections to 2020, Alamance,
Guilford, and Orange Counties**

In the second graph, the relatively modest population growth of Alamance County during the 1970's and 80's contrasts well with the much larger population additions associated with Guilford County.



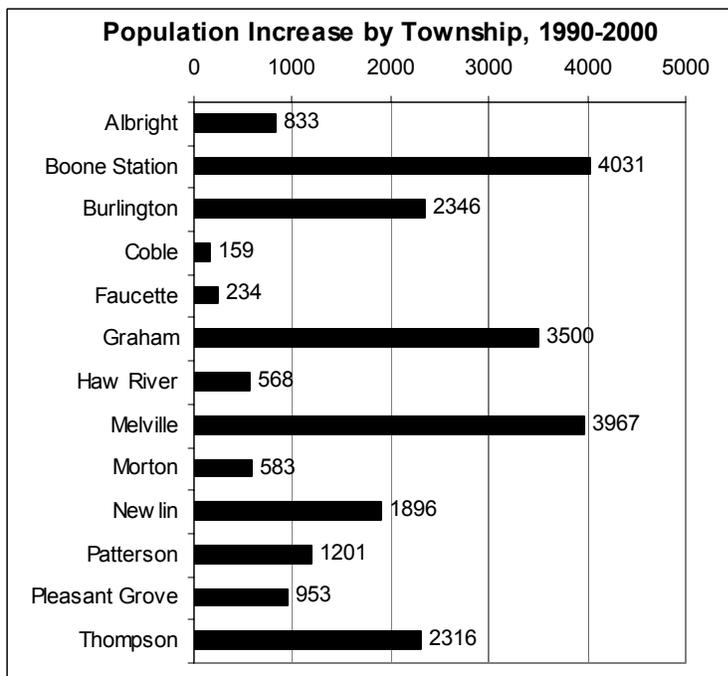
**Population Increases in Alamance Guilford and
Orange Counties, 1990-2000**

In the bar graph to the left, the numbers show that the greatest part of population increases in all three counties may be attributed to new people moving into the area, rather than natural increase resulting from more births than deaths.



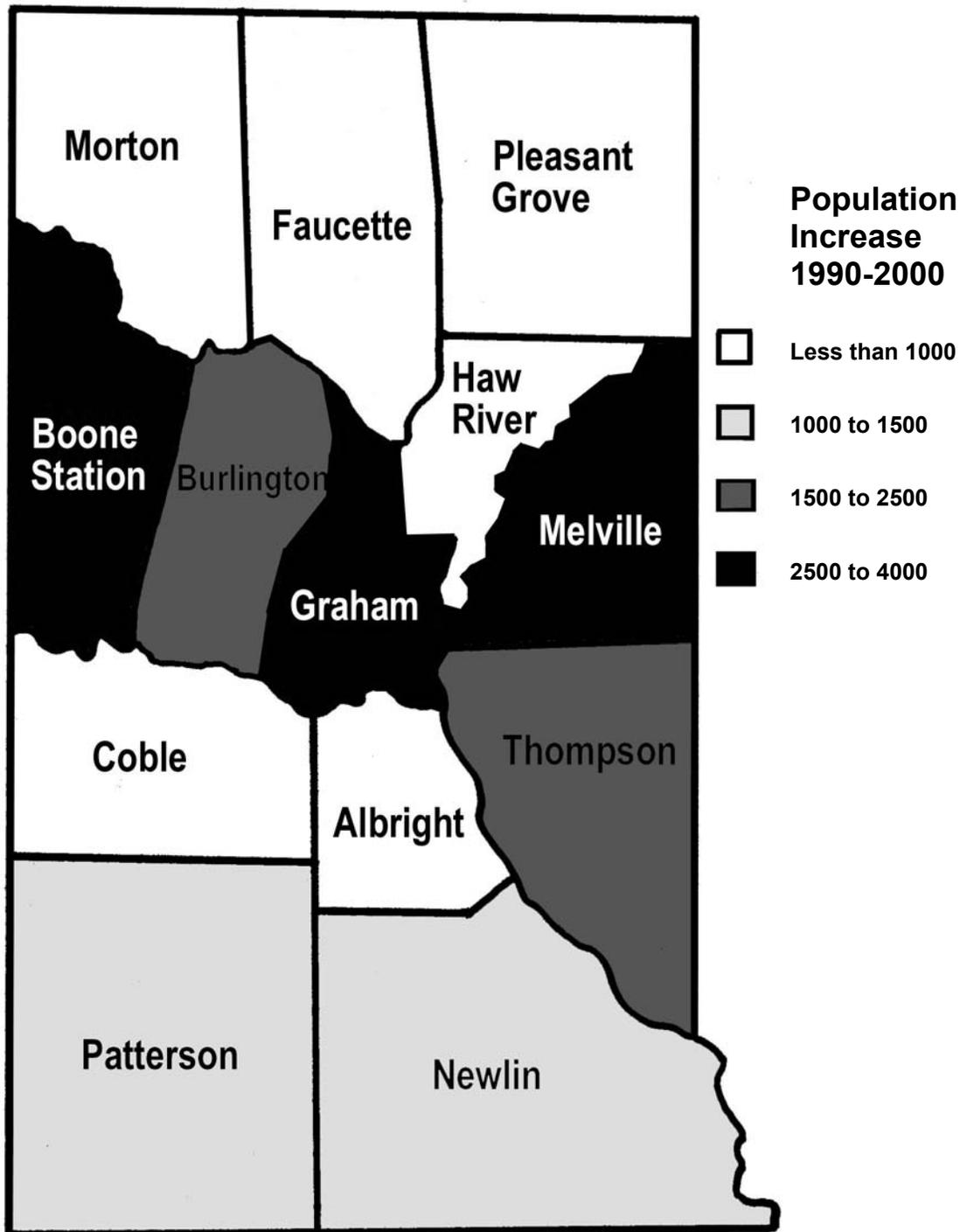
Population Distribution by Township, Alamance County, 1980-2000

As Alamance County has continued to grow, the percentage of the County's population living within the five townships straddling the I-40/85 corridor (Boone Station, Burlington, Graham, Haw River, and Melville) has remained constant at about 75 percent of the total. The more recent population growth of the past decade, however, has shifted to the east and west ends of this corridor. (Melville township to the east, closest to the Research Triangle and Boone Station township to the west, closest to Greensboro. See map next page)

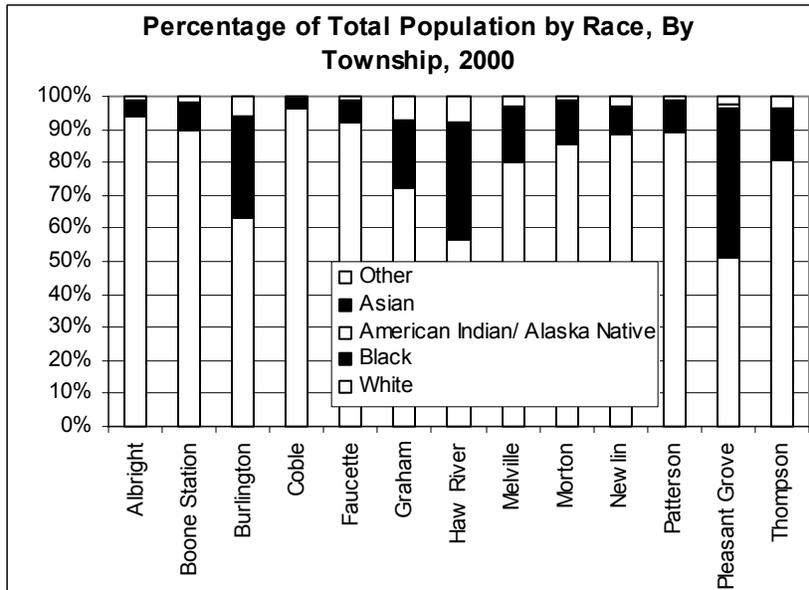


Population Increase by Township, Alamance County, 1990-2000

The bar graph to the left clearly shows the large numbers of people moving into four of the five urban corridor townships of Boone Station, Burlington, Graham, and Melville. Of the five urban corridor townships, only the Haw River township showed negligible growth during the 1990's. Of the remaining townships, the largest gainers were the Thompson and Newlin townships in the southeastern corner of the County, closest to Chapel Hill and the Research Triangle Park. During the next two decades, growth in this part of the county is expected to continue, accounting for a greater share of total population of the county.

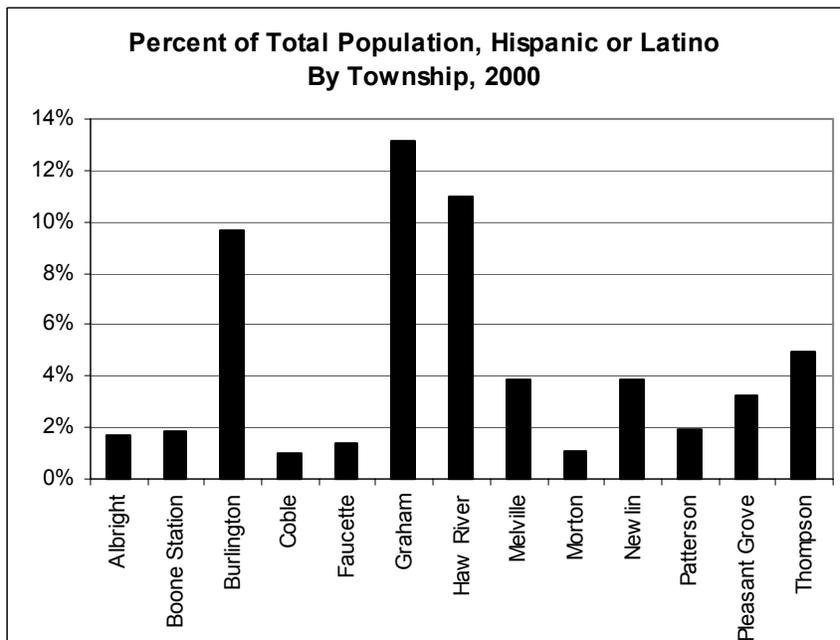


**Population Change By Township, 1990-2000
Alamance County**



Percent of Total Population by Race, 2000

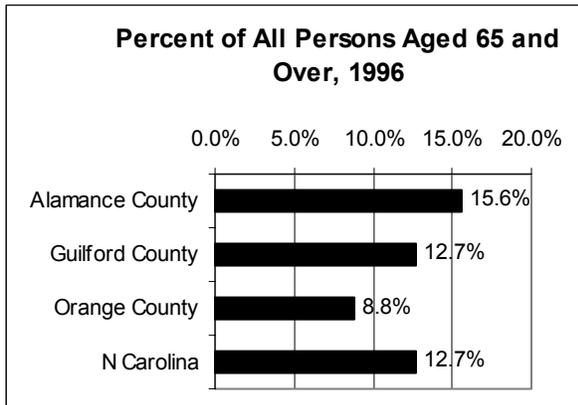
Of the thirteen townships in Alamance County, four had a Black population that represented more than 20% of the total: Burlington, Graham, Haw River, and Pleasant Grove. Pleasant Grove is included among the four largely due to the presence of the community of Green Level, as well as other minority enclaves in this part of the county.



Percent of Total Population of Hispanic or Latino Descent, 2000

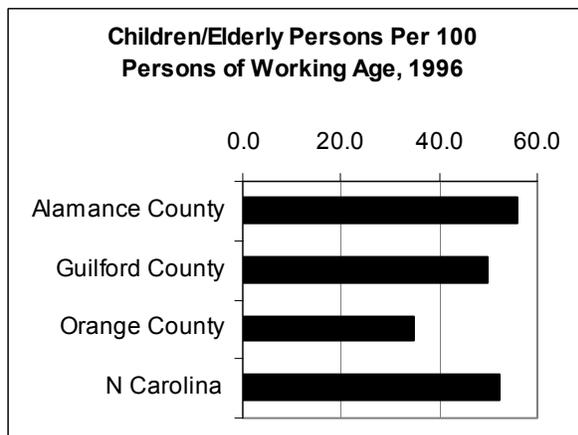
Of the thirteen townships in Alamance County, three stand out as having a disproportionately large Latino population as a percent of the total: Burlington, Graham, and Haw River.

Since the general populations of Burlington and Graham are quite large already, this suggests that large numbers of Latinos are especially concentrated in these two townships.



Persons Aged 65 and Over, 1996

The graph to the left shows that Alamance County's senior citizen population (i.e. 65 or older) made up over 15% of the total in 1996. This was higher than either Guilford or Orange Counties and higher than the State as a whole.

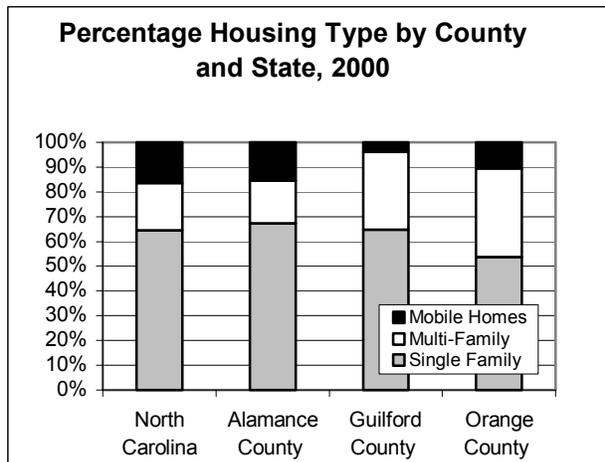


Children/Elderly Persons Per 100 Persons of Working Age, 1996

The number of *children and elderly persons per 100 persons of working age* is a measure of the level of "dependency" in a county. Notice that of the three counties in the comparison, only Alamance shows a higher level of dependency than the State average. This can be an indication that persons of prime working age are departing the county in search of better economic opportunities, while leaving the young and the elderly, who are typically less mobile, behind.

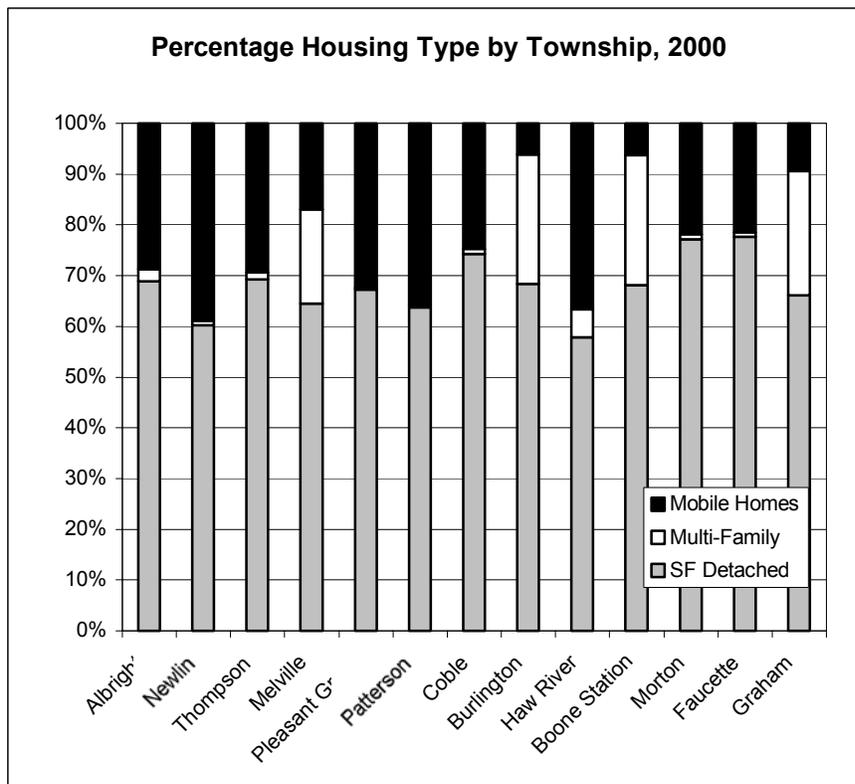
Measures of Housing Type and Condition

Measures of housing provide perspectives on the types and condition of housing in the County and relative to other areas in the State. Actions of Alamance County government should be employed, to the maximum extent possible, to facilitate the construction and proper maintenance of a wide range of housing types, serving all income groups and life stages. The County should also seek to foster quality housing so as to protect the investment of the homeowner, provide decent housing for the renter, and protect the tax base of the County.



Housing Type by County and State, 2000

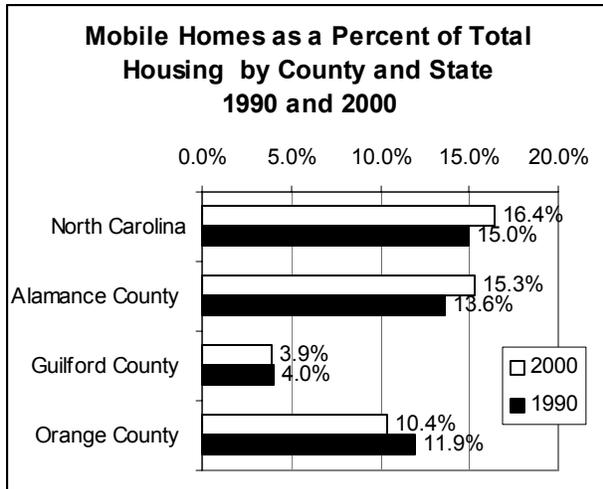
When compared to the State and the two other counties, Alamance County generally has a higher percentage of single family homes and a smaller percentage of multi-family housing. With regard to mobile homes, the county has a higher percentage than either Guilford County to the west or Orange County to the east, and is about average for the state.



Housing Types by Township, 2000

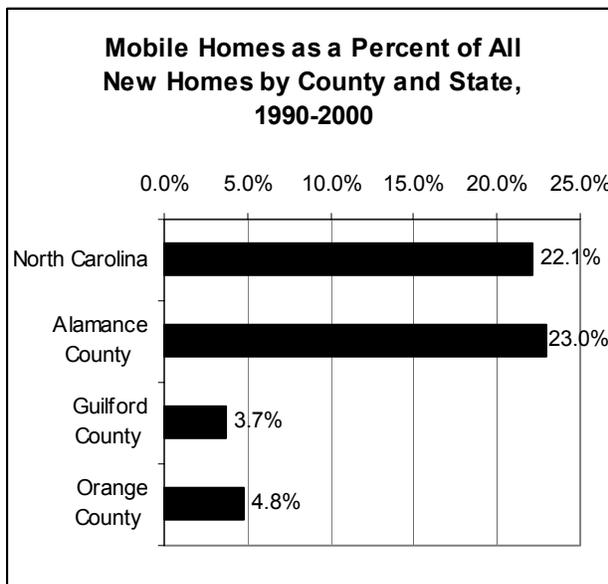
The graph to the left illustrates the distribution of housing by types in various parts of Alamance County. The Morton and Faucette Townships, in the northwest corner of the county, have the highest percentage of single family detached housing at nearly 80%. The Haw River Township has the lowest percentage of single family homes at about 57%. Haw River, along with the Newlin and Patterson Townships in the southern part of the county, have the highest percentage of mobile homes at 35-40% of the total. As might be expected, the heavily urbanized Melville (Mebane), Burlington, Boone Station

(Elon College, Gibsonville) and Graham townships have the highest percentages of multi-family housing ranging from 20 to about 25%.



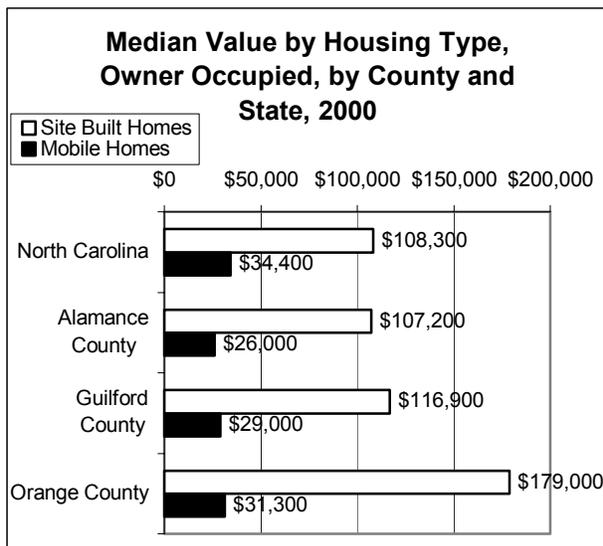
Mobile Homes as a Percent of Total Housing, 1990 and 2000

Among the three counties, Alamance County has the highest percentage of its housing stock in mobile homes. While the percentage declined in Guilford and Orange Counties from 1990 to 2000, it increased in Alamance County, and appears to be approaching the State average.



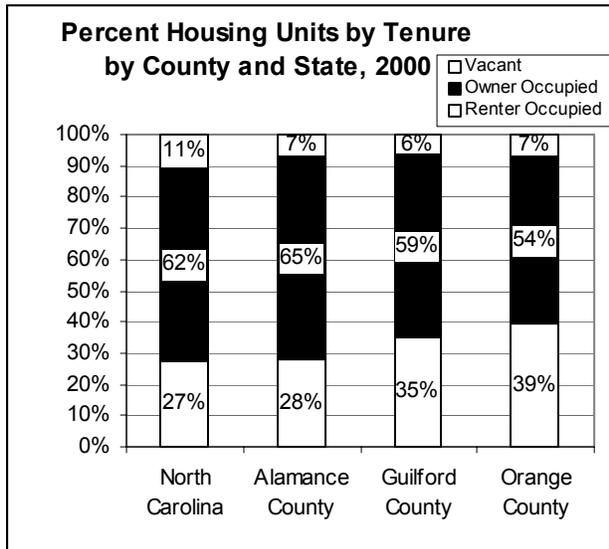
Mobile Homes as a Percent of All New Homes, 1990-2000

The chart to the left confirms the rapid growth of the stock of mobile homes in Alamance County during the 1990's. While less than 1 in 20 new residences in Guilford and Orange Counties during the decade were mobile homes, nearly 1 in 4 in Alamance County were mobile homes. This ratio was higher than the state average for the same period. Note that these ratios include new residences in the county's municipalities where mobile home placements are typically far less frequent. This means that the number of mobile homes as a percentage of the total in the unincorporated area is much higher than these numbers indicate.



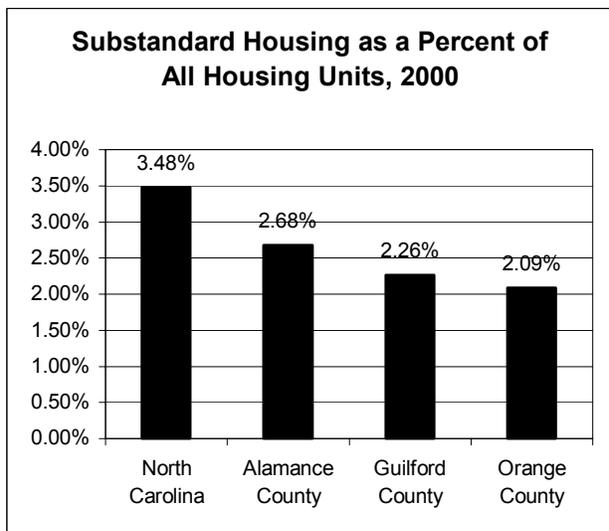
Median Value by Housing Type, Owner Occupied, by County and State, 2000

At \$26,000, the median value of mobile homes in Alamance County is the lowest among the three counties. It is also substantially lower than the average value of mobile homes across the state as a whole. When compared to conventional single family homes, mobile homes in Alamance County are valued at less than 25% of the average site built residence.



Percent Housing Units by Tenure by County and State, 2000

Alamance County has the highest percentage of owner occupancy among the three counties at 65%. Rental occupancy in the County is about the same as the state average. All three counties had similar vacancy rates at the time of the 2000 Census. The higher vacancy rate at the state level is perhaps due to the higher numbers of seasonal and second homes in those counties located in the mountains or at the ocean.

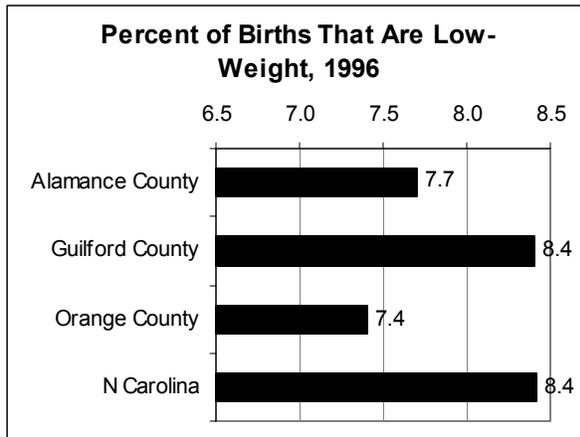


Substandard Housing as a Percent of All Housing Units, 2000

Alamance County has a higher proportion of its housing stock in substandard condition than do Guilford or Orange Counties. At the same time, the state average is higher than the County's.

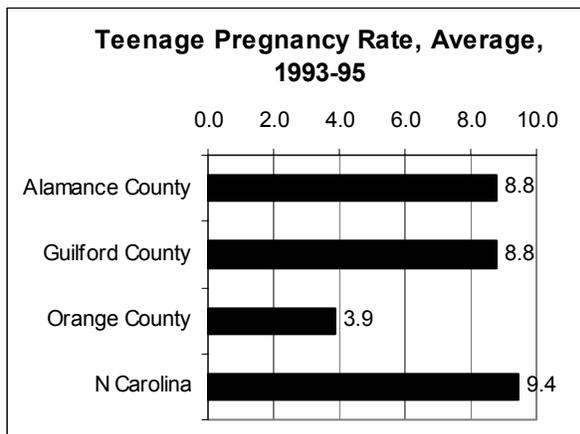
Measures of Social Health

Measures of social health offer significant insights into the social and economic makeup of the county. Actions of Alamance County government should be employed, to the maximum extent possible, to address the fundamental social and economic needs of the area.



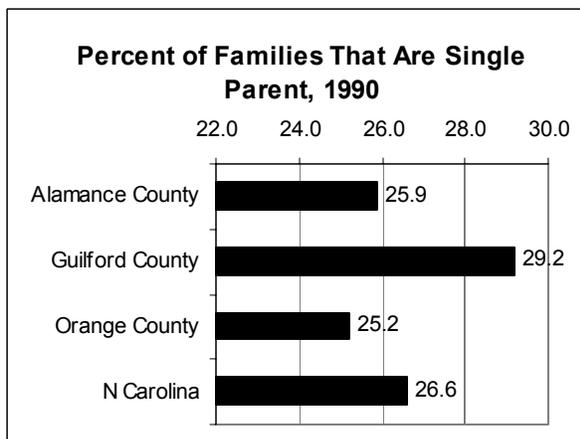
Low Weight Births, 1996

While Guilford County matched the State average for low weight births, Alamance and Orange Counties were significantly lower.



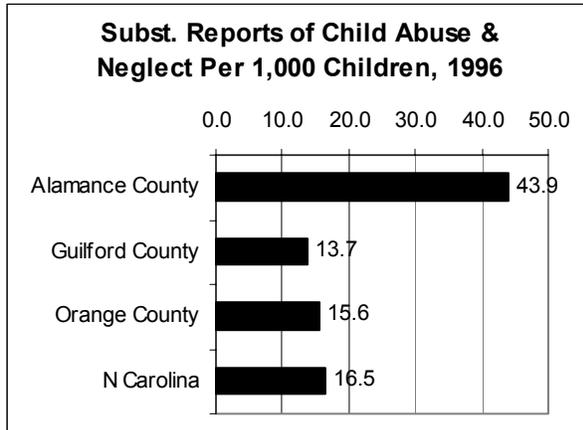
Teen Pregnancy Rate, 1993-95

While all three counties were lower than the State average with regard to the teenage pregnancy rate, Orange County's teenage pregnancy rate was less than half that of Alamance and Guilford.



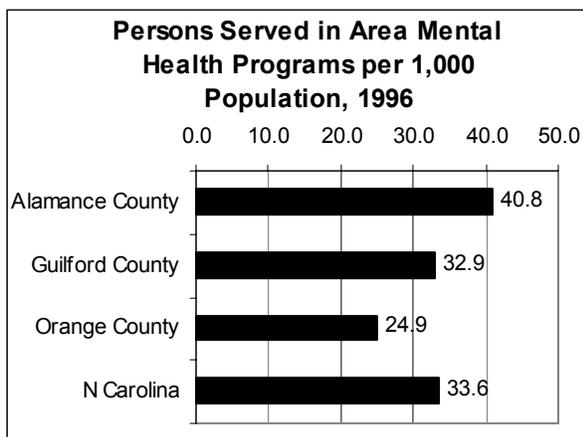
Single Parent Families, 1990

While Alamance and Orange Counties had a percentage of single parent families close to the state average, Guilford County was somewhat higher than that of the state. Thus, on average slightly over one fourth of all families in the state have a single parent.



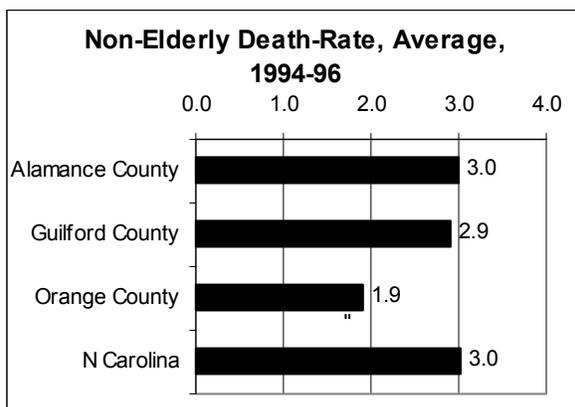
Child Abuse and Neglect, 1996

Among the three counties being compared, Alamance County had a dramatically higher incidence of reported child abuse and neglect. Alamance County was nearly three times higher than the average for the state as a whole. Guilford and Orange Counties, on the other hand, were about average for the state. *Note: According to the report entitled **Healthy Alamance**, child abuse and neglect is closely related to high levels of substance abuse in the area. Substance abuse was ranked in the top three most important health issues in Alamance County in 2001.*



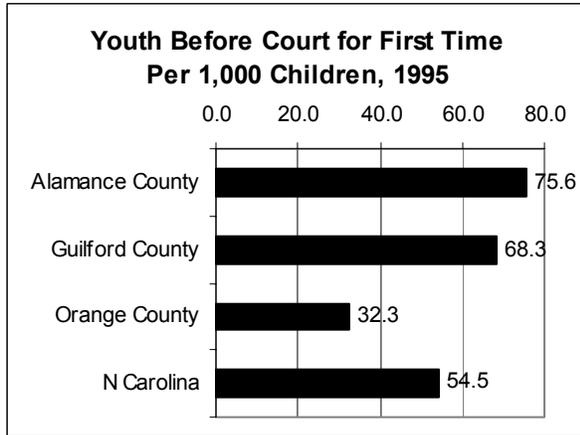
Mental Health Services, 1996

Among the three counties being compared, mental health programs in Alamance County served the greatest number of persons per capita. Guilford County was close behind, at about the state average. Orange County was as a distant third. Mental health programs in Alamance County also served a number of persons per 1000 people higher than the state as a whole. These service levels for mental health problems are consistent with area concerns about the high incidence of substance abuse and child abuse.



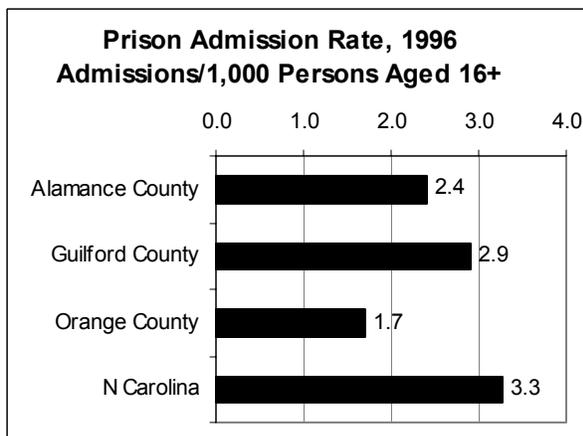
Non-Elderly Death Rate, 1994-96

The non-elderly death rate is a measure of many factors influencing the life expectancy of individuals. These factors may include quality of life, health care, diet, job safety, fatal traffic accidents, homicides, etc. Among the three counties being compared, Alamance County and Guilford County were on a par with the state average, while Orange County was substantially lower. Orange County's favorable showing in this category may be attributed to the general affluency of the area, higher educational levels and better health care, among other factors.



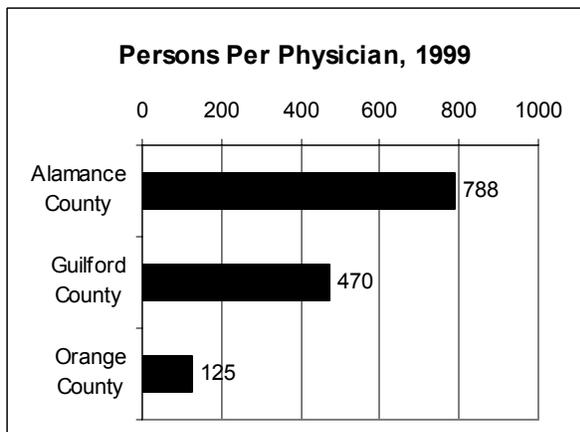
Youth Before the Court, 1995

Alamance County statistics concerning *youth before the court for the first time* were substantially higher than the state average. These numbers may be related to the high levels of child abuse, substance abuse and mental health issues among the general population.



Prison Admissions, 1996

The prison admission rate per capita in all three counties was lower than the state average.

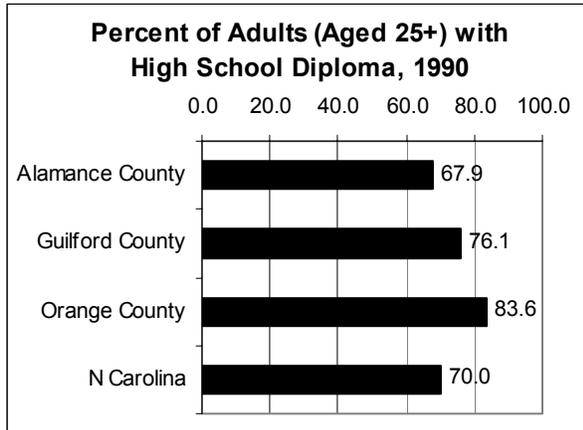


Persons Per Physician, 1999

Alamance County has long been suffering from a shortage of doctors compared to its more affluent counties on the east and west. In Orange County, for example, there were only 125 persons per doctor in 1999, compared to nearly 800 persons per doctor in Alamance County. While this situation has reportedly improved somewhat in recent years, the shortage, at least comparatively speaking, remains.

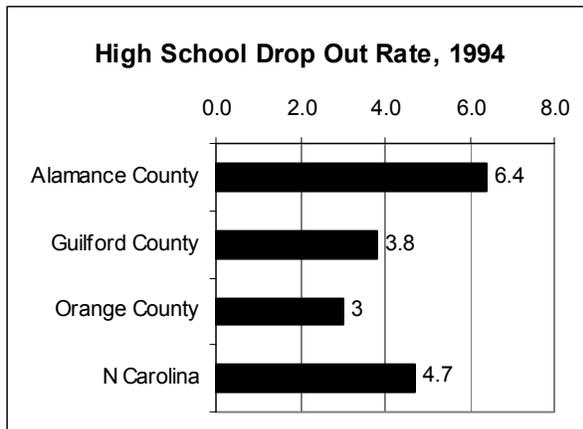
Measures of Education

Citizens participating in public input meetings for the strategic plan gave considerable attention to the importance of education to the future of Alamance County. Actions of Alamance County government with regard to the advancement of public education should, therefore, work to correct the deficiencies which lead to the lower than desirable measures of educational achievement outlined below.



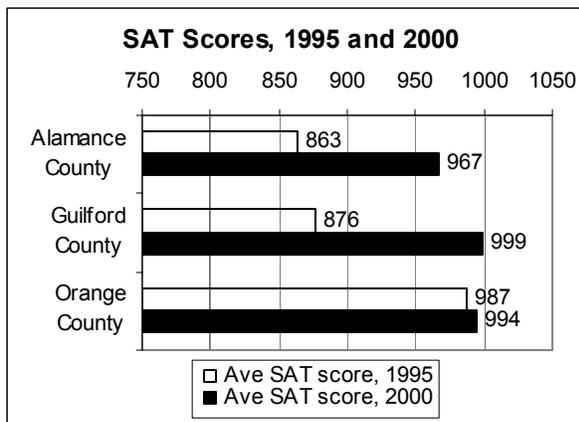
High School Graduates, 1990

Of the three counties being compared, Orange County was among the highest in the state with regard to the percentage of the adult population with a high school diploma. In contrast, about one-third of all adults over the age of 25 in Alamance County lacked a high school diploma in 1990.



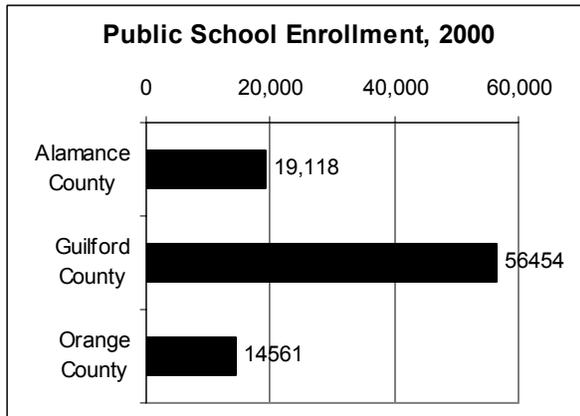
High School Drop Out Rate, 1994

Alamance County easily had highest high school drop out rate among the three counties being compared. The County's drop out rate was also substantially higher than the state average.



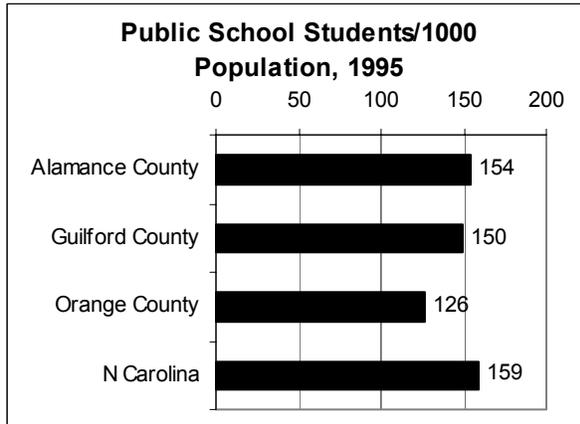
Average SAT Score, 1995

From 1995 to 2000, Alamance County and Guilford County made dramatic improvements in average SAT scores. Orange County, which has had consistently high SAT scores for many years showed modest improvement.



Public School Enrollment, 2000

Guilford County educates nearly three times as many public school students than does Alamance. This is to be expected, given the much greater population of Guilford County. A better way to compare enrollment levels is shown in the table below left.

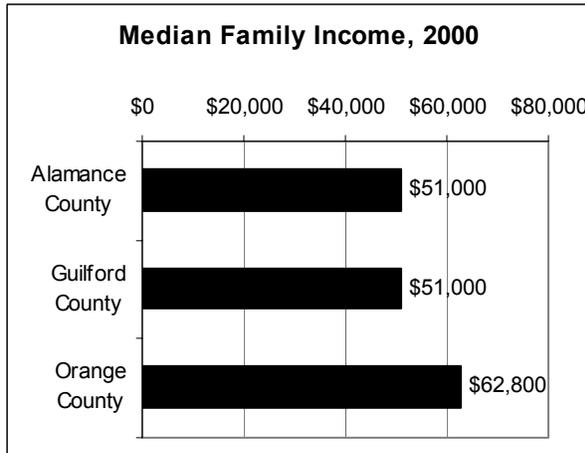


Public School Students per 1000 Persons, 1995

Among the counties being compared, all three had fewer public school students per capita than the state as a whole. Alamance had the greatest number of public school students per capita of the three counties being compared.

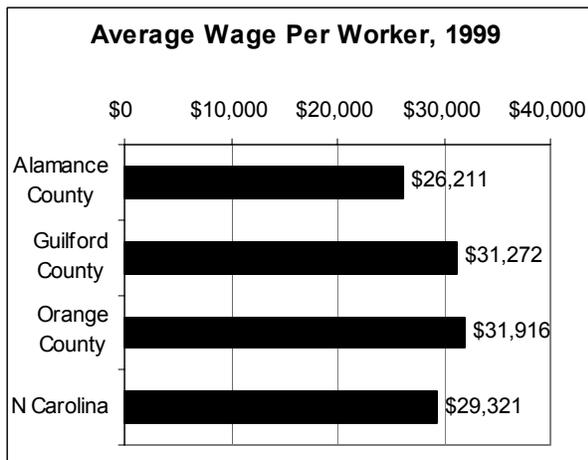
Measures of Economic Health and Diversity

For Alamance County, lower than average wages, but reasonably high median family incomes, tell a story of a County where it is common for both spouses to work outside the home. In all likelihood this phenomenon dates back to the height of the textile industry's influence in the area, when both men and women worked the mills. Actions of Alamance County government should be geared, to the maximum extent possible, to bring in higher paying jobs, diversify the economic base, and increase real household incomes.



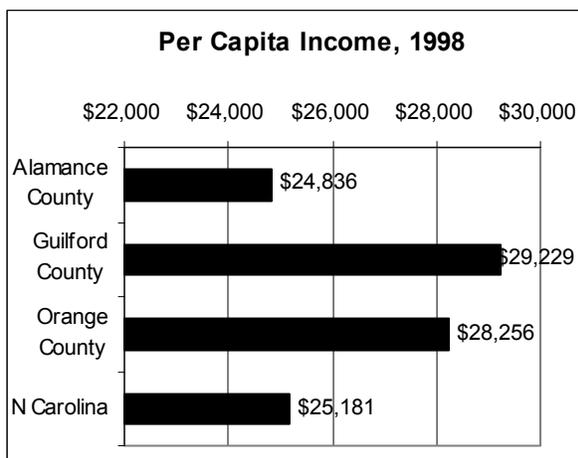
Median Family Income, 2000

Of the three counties, Orange County had a median family money income in 2000 substantially higher than the other two counties. Alamance and Guilford Counties were virtually tied, despite the much greater size of the Greensboro urbanizing area.



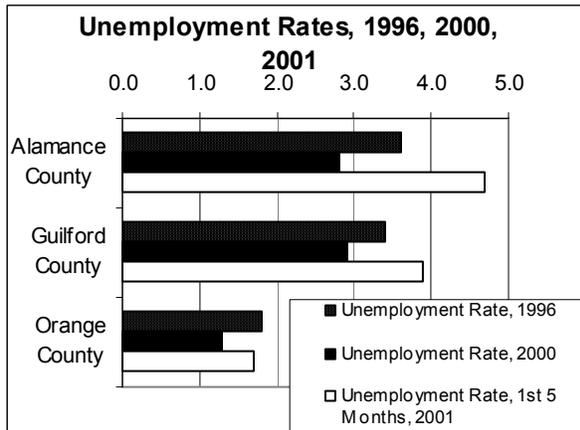
Average Annual Wages, 1999

The average annual wage per worker in Alamance County in 1999 was about 89 percent of the average annual wage per worker statewide. At the same time, workers in Alamance County were paid only about 83 percent of what workers were paid in the two adjoining counties to the east and west.



Per Capita Income, 1998

Per capita income is the total personal income of the area divided by the total population. Per capita income in Alamance County is only slightly less than for the state as a whole. At the same time, it is only about 86 percent of the per capita income in the two adjoining counties.



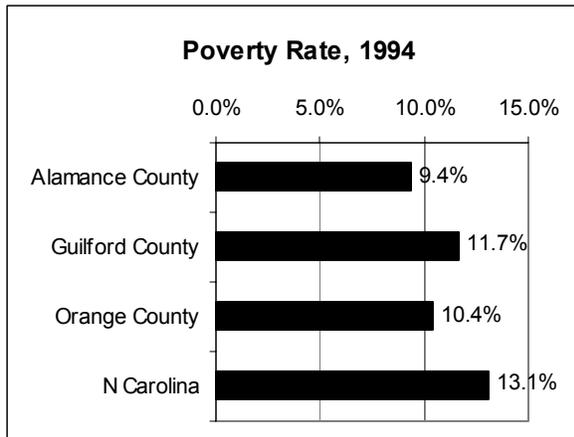
Unemployment Rates for 1996, 2000 and 2001

The unemployment rate in Alamance County has generally been higher in recent years than in the more service oriented counties to the east and west. While Orange County maintained an unemployment rate of less than 2 percent during the five year period, Alamance County's unemployment rate varied from about 3 percent up to nearly 5 percent. These differences are due, in part, to layoffs in the declining textile industry which has had a major presence in Alamance County for two centuries.



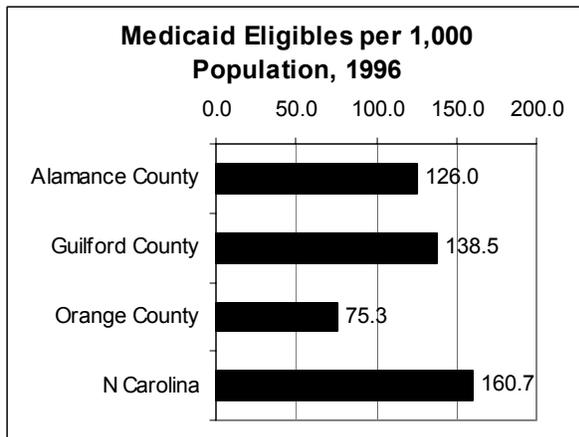
Gross Retail Sales Per Capita

Among the three counties, the retail service center of Guilford County (Greensboro) clearly has an impact on the volume of retail sales per capita. Guilford County led the field in 1995 and extended its lead in this area in 2000. In other words, people from Alamance County (and elsewhere) are in all likelihood, spending at least some portion of their retail dollar in Guilford County. Conversely, fewer people in Guilford County have to travel outside their home county for the goods and services they desire.



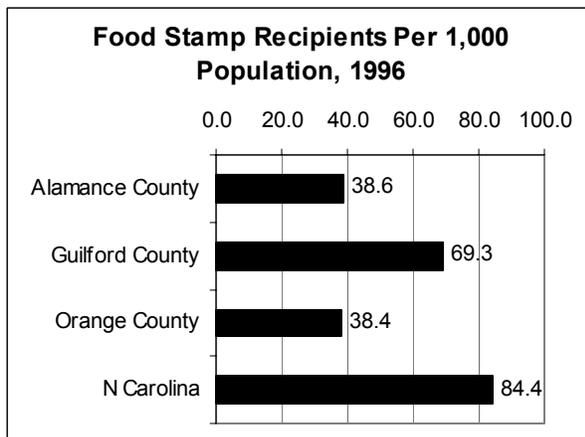
Poverty Rate, 1994

Statistics for 1994 show that Alamance County had the lowest levels of poverty among the three counties being compared. Less than 10 percent of the total county population lived below the poverty level in that year. This compares with a statewide poverty rate of over 13 percent for the same year.



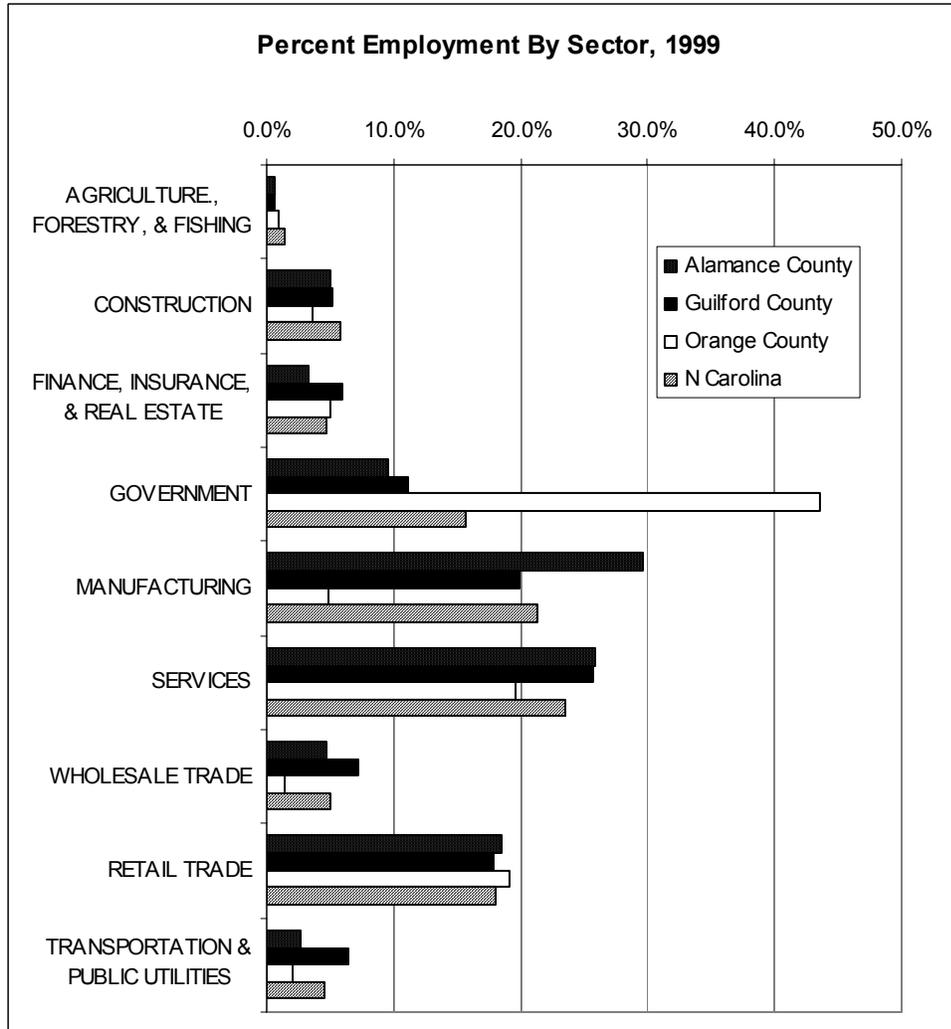
Medicaid Eligibles, 1996

With one exception, the numbers for Medicaid eligible persons are generally consistent with the levels of poverty noted above. The figures for Alamance and Guilford Counties, as well as the state as a whole, roughly parallel the poverty rates shown in the chart above. However, Orange County figures are the exception. This inconsistency may have to do with the presence of a large university population.



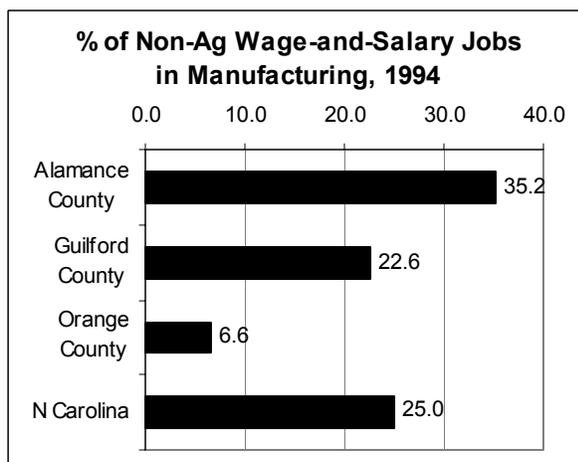
Food Stamp Recipients, 1995

Similar to the situation concerning Medicaid eligibility, only Orange County figures for food stamp recipients appear to be inconsistent with the poverty rate in the County. Both Orange and Alamance County have less than half the number of food stamp recipients per 1,000 than the state average.



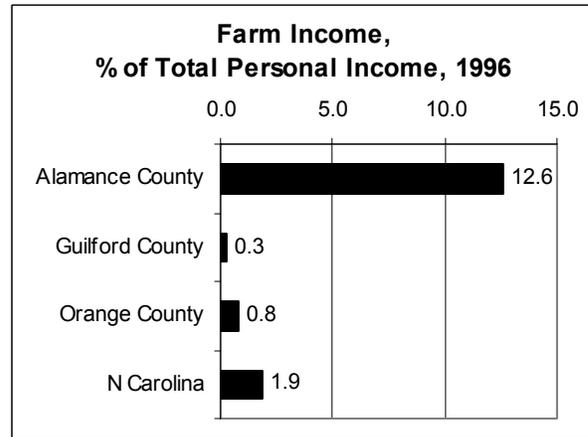
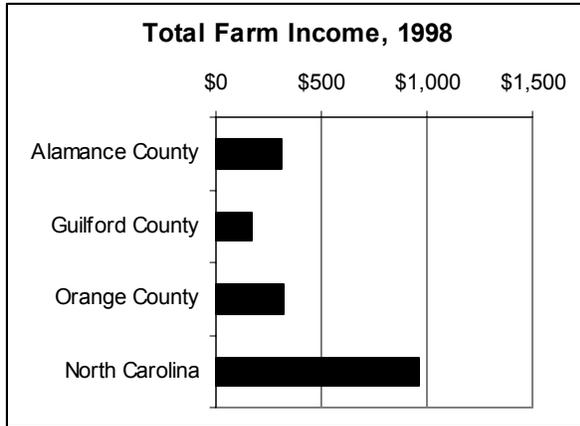
Percent Employment by Sector, 1999

When comparing the percentage of all workers in the three counties across the various employment sectors, only a couple items stand out. First, Orange County, with the huge number of public employees at UNC-Chapel Hill, easily has the largest percentage of its work force in the government sector. (Alamance County has the fewest.) Second, Alamance County clearly leads the field in terms of manufacturing employment as a percentage of total employment. This statistic is further amplified in the chart below.



Percent of Non Agricultural and Salary Jobs in Manufacturing, 1994

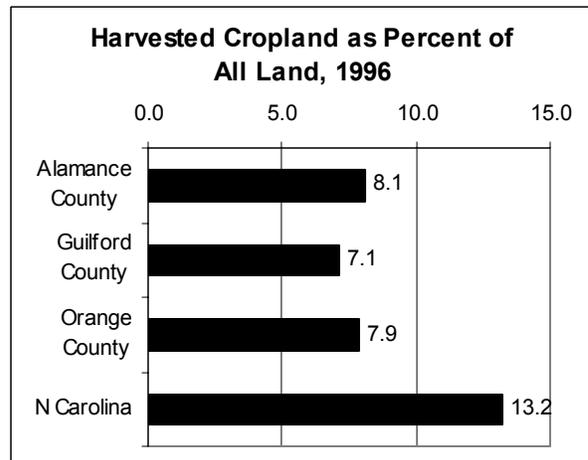
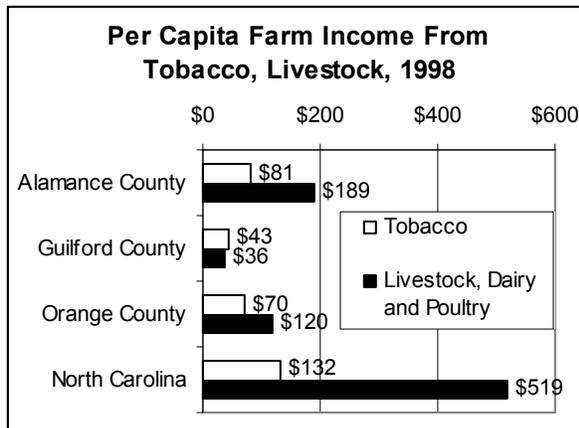
The bar chart to the left shows dramatic differences in the percentage of the work force in manufacturing in Alamance County versus Guilford and Orange Counties. In 1994, fully 35 percent of non-agricultural and salary jobs in Alamance County were in the manufacturing sector. This is a high percentage for any county, given that the average statewide that same year was only 25 percent.



Farm Income

The two bar charts above say much about the influence of agriculture on the economy of Alamance County. In terms of *total farm income per capita*, Alamance County is roughly on a par with Guilford and Orange Counties. The approximate \$300 per person in Alamance County is quite modest when compared with the statewide average of nearly \$1000 per person.

In terms of *farm income as a percent of total personal income*, however, figures reveal that Alamance County relies much more heavily on the sale of farm products than do most counties in the state. While nearly 13 percent of total personal income in Alamance County may be credited to farming, less than 2 percent of total personal income statewide is agricultural in nature.



Farm Income From Tobacco, Livestock

As might be expected from a county in transition like Alamance, *farm income from tobacco and livestock* in 1998 was less than the state as a whole, but more than heavily urbanized Guilford County. As Alamance County has become more urbanized, the traditional tobacco farms in the north and dairy farms in the south have gradually been replaced by suburban development.

Harvested Cropland as a Percent of All Land

Given the rolling terrain of the area and the predominance of pastureland and dairy farming over much of the county, it is not surprising that Alamance County's *harvested cropland as a percentage of all land* is only slightly higher than the two adjoining counties.

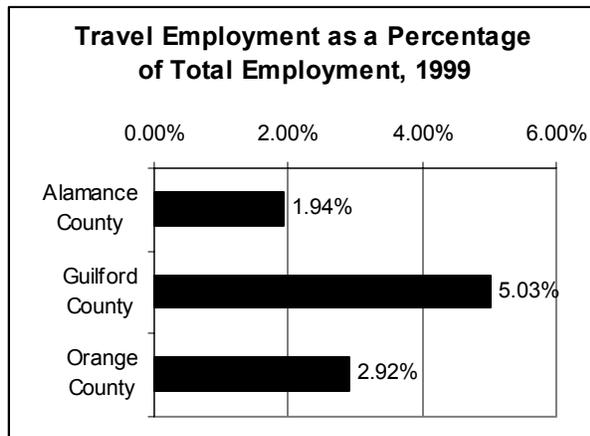
The Travel Industry

The three bar graphs on this page show the undisputed dominance of Guilford County, among the three counties, in the area of travel and tourism.



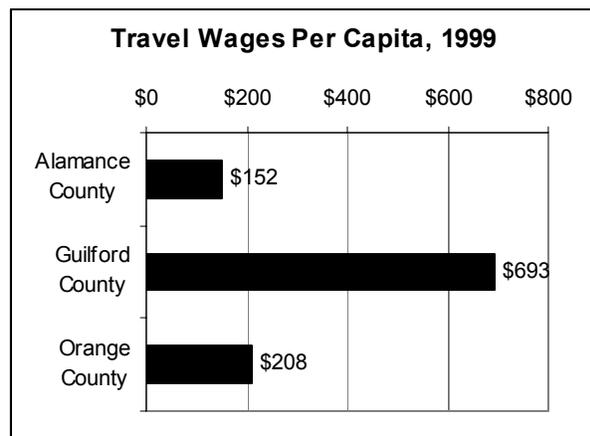
Travel Employment, 1999

In 1999, the travel industry in Guilford County employed over 14,000 workers, compared to just 1600 in Orange County and only 1200 in Alamance County.



Travel Employment as a Percent of Total Employment, 1999

In 1999, the travel industry in Guilford County employed just over 5 percent of the total work force in the county. This compared with about 3% of the work force in Orange County and 2% in Alamance.



Travel Wages Per Capita, 1999

Perhaps the greatest difference among the three counties may be measured in terms of travel wages per capita. While the travel industry paid out nearly \$700 for every man, woman and child in Guilford County, wages paid to Alamance County travel industry employees was but \$150 per capita county-wide.

* Since these graphs were prepared, more recent travel data has become available. However, the new data would not change the relative comparisons among the three counties.

Vision Statements



- *Orderly Growth*
 - *Economic Development*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Education*
 - *Utility Infrastructure*
 - *Quality of Life*
-



Vision Statements

Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan

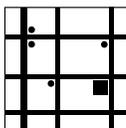
The following Vision Statements are based, in large measure, on comments received from over 100 Alamance County residents at two special public input meetings held during September and October of 2001. Citizens in attendance at the meetings were asked the question: “*What are some of the most important issues facing Alamance County as we move into the 21st century?*” The participants identified over 300 ideas, concerns, and issues. Following the meetings, all 300 ideas were sorted into subject areas and analyzed in detail. Based on the ideas received at these meetings, draft vision statements were prepared by the planning consultant and then reviewed and edited by the Work Group. The following Vision Statements establish a clearer picture of where Alamance County would like to be in the year 2020. These Vision Statements lay the foundation for the policies and actions necessary to make this vision a reality. *Please note: These Vision Statements are written as if it is now the year 2020 and we are looking at what has come about as a result of actions identified in the 2020 plan.*



1. Education.

We see older schools restored and modernized with new schools built to avoid overcrowding. We

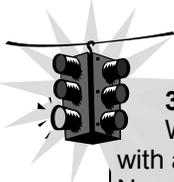
by leaders committed to excellence, strong parental involvement with broad-based civic and corporate support. We see an excellent, balanced school system, where teaching and learning can flourish in an environment of discipline, respect and accountability. Excellent technical and industrial training is available locally at the junior college level and can be custom-tailored to the particular needs of business and industry.



2. Growth Management.

We see new developments consuming less land per house, thereby reducing sprawl and preserving open space and farmland. Many new neighborhoods have compatible shopping and

countryside but, rather, is clustered in areas well suited for development. The location of new developments has been carefully coordinated with city and county plans for infrastructure, including transportation and transit, water and sewer services, schools, and parks and open space. A growth management system has been established for the unincorporated area, including a flexible system of

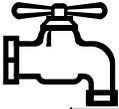


3. Transportation.

We see a system of interconnected local roads and major thoroughfares, developed in accordance with a carefully prepared countywide transportation plan, and coordinated with state and federal plans. Nearly all unpaved roads in the county have been paved and improved. Children, senior citizens,

transit options include buses, taxis and vans. Bike and pedestrian paths have been developed in many

parts of the county, taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by stream and utility corridors. The entire transportation system has been designed to feed into regional and inter-regional rail and air services, thereby reducing reliance upon the automobile and alleviating traffic congestion on major thoroughfares.



4. Water and Sewer Services.

We see water and sewer systems extended to any part of the county where planned or existing



5. Recreation, Parks and Open Space.

We see a variety of recreation and park facilities in all areas of Alamance County designed to meet the such as soccer and multi-purpose fields. We also see a well-developed system of walking and biking trails adjacent to the Haw River and its tributaries, as well as within certain utility corridors. This “greenway system” connects many schools, parks, open spaces, and neighborhoods and is enjoyed by hikers and bicyclists of all ages. Many greenway trails have been made possible by the generosity of individuals and corporations who have donated conservation easements, in exchange for state and federal tax benefits.



6. Environmental Quality.

We see areas vital to the environmental quality of our county, such as critical watershed areas, generations. We see a county with clean air, made possible by less dependence upon the automobile, the recruitment of environmentally compatible industry, and the resolution of regional air quality issues. Our development patterns are designed to cause less traffic congestion and require shorter commutes. We have effectively reduced storm water runoff and pollution into the Haw River and its tributaries due, in part, to our commitment to minimizing stormwater runoff from all sources, including urban, industrial and agricultural areas.



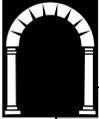
7. Economic Development.

We see a local economic base made up of clean industries providing good paying jobs, particularly to numbers of persons are also employed in services, general retail, and other diversified industries. We see the offspring of Alamance County residents finding excellent career opportunities in the area, with the prospect of continued advancement as they develop their working skills and earning power.



8. Housing and Neighborhoods.

We see neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and values, including attractive, affordable on single family lots, but also apartments, condominiums, townhouses, duplexes and appropriate senior options.



9. Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation

We see renewed respect for the historic character and heritage of Alamance County, as exhibited by downtowns with a wide range of shopping, dining, working, and cultural attractions. Rather than constantly developing more strip shopping centers and then abandoning them, we have learned to first consider the reuse of existing buildings. As a result, our older commercial corridors have been revitalized and now offer a variety of commercial establishments and clean industrial uses. Likewise, we see much attention and investment flowing into our older residential neighborhoods, where infrastructure is already in place.



10. Public Safety.

We see more law enforcement officers “out in the County”, operating from multiple sub-stations close to the population they serve. As a result, our law enforcement personnel have become especially attuned to the issues and problems unique to the rural areas of Alamance County. Our emergency management system has been upgraded considerably in terms of communications capability, committed to working together for public safety. Our citizens and our public safety officers continue to support a safe and secure community free of drugs, violence and crime, and prepared for whatever disasters may come our way, whether natural or manmade (terrorism).



11. Senior Citizens

We see an active senior citizen population, whose ranks have grown larger by the aging of the post war baby boom generation and senior citizens choosing to retire in this area. Through early recognition of this “wave of senior citizens”, the county has been able to respond with appropriate recreation, County has also facilitated the private sector construction of many additional affordable housing units for an aging population.



12. Health Care.

As Alamance County has grown, area health care providers have continued to offer and expand high



13. Community Appearance.

We see our major highways and streets unencumbered by old, overdone and excessive signage. We proper trash disposal. We see County regulations strengthened to close illegal junkyards, improve the appearance of approved junkyards, and to remove junked cars from our roadsides.



14. Solid Waste Management.

We see a county that, in preparing for the future, has maintained several options to meet its solid waste than ever, on recycling, composting and other means of reducing the volume of trash that we must dispose of. Our county has continued to work with other local governments in the region on area-wide



15. Funding to Pay for County Needs.

We see that, as Alamance County has grown, new manufacturing and commercial enterprises have growth. Supplemental district taxes are employed to pay for special services in certain parts of the county. The County has been especially diligent in seeking new funding sources for education as the costs of building schools and paying for teachers for a growing population have become evident. At the same time, the County has effectively employed technology to improve its services while keeping



16. Cultural Diversity/Acceptance.

We see a county that understands and appreciates a diverse population made greater by the common County has made special efforts in the area of cultural acceptance and has worked effectively to expand our local culture to embrace the strengths and interests of the Latino community, in particular.



17. Inter-Governmental Cooperation/Regionalism

We see Alamance County as an integral part of a greater region. Bounded by the Piedmont Triad on neighbors on all sides, as well as state officials, to resolve issues related to air quality, water quality, solid waste management, and transportation. Locally, our County government has worked constructively with local elected officials and managers on matters of economic development, education, recreation, public safety, emergency communications, and growth management, in particular.



18. Civic Involvement and Leadership

We see a great many Alamance County residents, from school-aged children to senior citizens, with a keen interest in the affairs of their County government. There is a can-do spirit driven by civic pride and participation on county boards and committees. Area young people are engaged in a variety of community service projects, from assisting with day care, to student tutoring, to teen court activity. Our citizens are heavily involved in civic clubs and organizations; volunteerism is a constant source of energy as it is poured into the institutions and organizations that work to improve our county.

Policy Section



- *Orderly Growth*
 - *Economic Development*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Education*
 - *Utility Infrastructure*
 - *Quality of Life*
-



Policy Section

Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan

Introduction to the Policies

The following pages contain the official policies of the Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan. These policies are presented largely in response to issues identified by the public at numerous meetings held during the plan's preparation and as further discussed by the Strategic Plan Work Group. Each major category of the Strategic Plan Policies is addressed according to the following format:

<i>Discussion</i>	A summary of the issues and relevant findings.
<i>Policy Statement(s)</i>	Statement(s) of local government principal designed to achieve legitimate public objectives related to the issue.

The purpose of the narrative (discussion) is to provide background and rationale for the ensuing policy statement. In most instances, the discussion serves to identify a problem or issue, and may present a summary of findings from the Growth Factors Analysis, other specific plans or discussion points of the Work Group. Perhaps most importantly, the narrative can be consulted on questions of “legislative intent”—i.e. what the County intends for the policy to address and why.

The policy statements are presented in bold type and numbered for easy reference. When adopted, they are to be viewed as official policy positions of Alamance County government. As such, the policies should remain substantially unchanged over time. Frequent changes to the policies would undermine their effectiveness in achieving intended planning and management objectives. Indeed, the policies are designed to maintain a consistent and predictable direction for County government decisions over a period of several years. The policies provide a basis for future decisions regarding general development, capital improvements, provision of County services, intergovernmental planning and cooperation, and other related matters.

Key words, often used in the policy statements, have special meaning.

Certain key words are used frequently in policy statements. The following glossary is intended to convey the specific meaning of these key words as used in the Strategic Plan Policy Statements.

adequate: sufficient to achieve the intended purpose or prevent harm

allow, authorize, permit: official action to let something happen

control: to regulate or direct

discourage: to not favor; to dissuade

encourage: to favor or foster (also see support)

may: provides the option, but not required

preferred: among alternatives, the favored course

prohibit: not allowed, period

promote: to proactively encourage, to take positive steps

reasonable, reasonably: practical, not extreme

require: to mandate something

shall: mandatory, not optional

should: preferred or recommended but not mandatory

significant: important, as determined by quantity or relative impact

support: to foster; may imply financial support

The policies of the Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan begin on the following page.

Policy Section 1: Preferred Development Pattern

This section suggests how future development in Alamance County might best be directed from a community livability, environmental quality and fiscal efficiency perspective.

Town and Country Development Pattern Preferred.

It has been said that the best way to preserve the countryside is to build better towns. This means providing incentives, including infrastructure and services, intended to attract the majority of new residents to locations in or near existing urban centers, such as Burlington, Elon, Gibsonville, Graham, Haw River, Mebane and others. It could also mean establishing new urban enclaves, designed from the start with necessary infrastructure, shopping, and amenities. Further, such new development should be directed away from productive natural resource areas, including farmlands, wetlands and sensitive environmental areas, such as the county's protected watershed areas and the Haw River corridor¹. The resulting development pattern might best be described as "town and country" or "village and country". The intended cumulative effect is to direct growth in a manner that focuses most new developments in compact, village-like clusters, while avoiding intrusions into productive farmlands, extensive woodlands and open space. At the same time, truly rural development is also to be encouraged; rural development that is of density low enough to preserve the countryside for generations to come.

The "Front Porch Neighborhood" Should Be Offered as an Alternative

It is accurate to observe that, for the past 50 years, few alternatives to the suburban tract home have been offered to the home-buying public. The fact is the compact, "front porch" neighborhood, so prevalent for a century before the Second World War, has been made unlawful to build in most communities in America. Many of today's development standards work in direct opposition to "front porch" neighborhoods. Acreage standards for septic tanks, for example, require lot sizes that are neither urban nor truly rural, but somewhere in-between. Most land use plans, developed during the post war backlash against the urban/industrial complex, require the total separation of residential areas from non-residential areas, thereby making an entire generation automobile dependent. These typical subdivisions are intended to create the illusion of "country living"; unfortunately, such rural area subdivisions may serve to break up the farmland and open space they seek to enjoy.

Town Living Isn't For Everyone, However.

It is true, however, that not everyone wants to live in a village or town, or out in the country on a five or ten-acre plot of land. In fact, for the last 50 years, it can rightfully be said that most American families have chosen to live in the mid-sized lots of typical suburban subdivisions. The real estate tastes of most residents of Alamance County have conformed to this pattern, as tract-style post-war subdivisions have multiplied, particularly within a reasonable commuting distance of the Burlington-Graham metropolitan area and, more recently, to work destinations outside the county. This plan, therefore, would not preclude the development of the standard subdivision; it simply encourages that other options be made available. In addition, to the "Front Porch Neighborhood", this plan also discusses in some detail the advantages of so-called Greenspace Developments as an alternative to the standard post-war subdivision. (See Housing and Neighborhood Policy Section)

County Actions to Provide More Options for Development

Local governments around the country are only now beginning to go about the process of amending their development regulations to allow forms of development other than the tract-style, single use subdivision. Therefore, this plan calls upon the County to create opportunities for traditional "front porch" neighborhoods in locations where water, sewer, and other urban amenities may make such development feasible in the coming years. At the same time, the County should also amend or create

¹ A discussion of the County's protected watershed areas is included in the Section on **Water Quality**. On-going efforts to improve and preserve the natural qualities of the Haw River for its environmental and recreational values are covered in the Section on **Parks and Recreation**.

development standards allowing for “greenspace developments” as further described in Section 3: **Housing and Neighborhood Development.**

In taking these actions, the county will be fostering the preservation of farms, woodlands, open space and natural areas in an entirely positive manner. “Front porch neighborhoods” and “greenspace developments” should be offered not as required development forms, but rather as attractive alternatives.

Finally, if Alamance County is to be able to implement a preferred pattern of development such as that described above and in the policy sections immediately following, the County will want to consider establishing zoning-- if only for those parts of the county where development pressures are most evident and where water and sewer services may be available in the next five to ten years.

POLICY ON PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Policy 1.1: Alamance County shall encourage developments which contribute to a distinct “town and country” or “village and country” development pattern. The intent of this policy is to foster a return to balanced, full-service communities, allow for the preservation of true open space, productive farms, woodlands, and important natural areas, to coordinate and minimize costs of extending infrastructure and services, to avoid higher taxes, and to minimize traffic congestion and negative environmental impacts associated with suburban sprawl.

Policy Section 2: Agricultural and Rural Area Preservation

Farm statistics nationwide reveal a long-term trend toward decreases in agricultural employment and cropland acreage over many decades. Alamance County is no exception to this trend. Over the past two decades in particular, the county has experienced the conversion of substantial amounts of agricultural land into residential and commercial development. Much of the dissolution of the countryside has been the result of sprawling, leapfrog development in previously rural areas of the county. This is not surprising, in that many of the same factors that make land good for farming, also make land good for development-- well drained, already cleared, relatively level, fertile for growing crops (or lawns and shrubbery), etc.

Farmland and Open Space Is Being Invaded

Of all the growth issues identified during the early stages of this plan’s development, none has been more widely discussed than farmland preservation. Regardless of one’s interests or motivations, there appears to be a broadly held desire to see that the loss of rural and agricultural lands be stemmed. Most often, the scenario described goes something like...

“A new subdivision recently moved into the midst of our farming community. Not long after, these new residents began complaining about the dust, odors, farm equipment operations, etc. that are the normal and necessary characteristics of our farming and agricultural production. Even worse, these same non-farm residents have filed lawsuits against we farmers...something has to be done.”

For farmers in Alamance County, the indiscriminate consumption of agricultural land can mean the loss of a livelihood and a way of life handed down for generations. For urban area residents, declining farmland acreage means the loss of a “natural” part of the County’s open space system and agricultural heritage. The rural landscape of these areas provides visual relief to the more intense development character of the county’s towns. Regardless of the specific type of open space— cropland, pastureland or woodland— such lands are becoming increasingly recognized across the country— and locally—for the multiple values they hold.

Farmland and Open Space More Than Pays for Itself in Taxes

For Alamance County government, retention of farmland and open space offers the promise of a favorable balance sheet when comparing taxes generated versus service costs incurred. Various studies have shown that, contrary to conventional wisdom, open space, farms, and woodlands have a more favorable ratio of taxes to service costs than most forms of residential development. (See Policy Section on Paying for Growth, for more information.)

Compact Growth and a “Town and Country” Growth Pattern

As stated previously, this plan holds that the best way to preserve the countryside is to do a better job of building new communities in distinct town and village-like settings. This plan refers to such a development pattern as “town and country”. (See Policy Section on Preferred Growth Pattern for details). This means new development takes on the form of a real *community*, rather than a series of unrelated, sprawling, suburban-style *subdivisions*. Growth management policies that encourage a more compact urban growth pattern have the dual benefit of building a more economically efficient, serviceable community while also conserving agricultural and rural land areas. Foremost among the methods that can be employed to encourage the compact growth associated with a “town and country” pattern is the strategic placement of urban infrastructure, such as public water and sewer, to direct growth away from prime agricultural lands, and open space, as well as environmentally sensitive land and water areas.

Ability of the Farmer to Sell His Land for Development

The preservation of farmland and family farms raises the question of whether a town and country growth pattern would constrain the ability of farmers to sell their land for development. The policies of this plan are not designed to prevent the sale of land, but rather to discourage its *premature* conversion from farming to development. In other words, this plan recognizes that as an area grows, development has the tendency to expand into the countryside. The objective of this plan is not to halt such expansion, but to consolidate it so as to prevent important farmland from being broken up by intrusive, leapfrog development. By definition, leapfrog development passes over land that is ripe for development in favor of cheaper land farther out of town. Unfortunately, such development typically places new subdivisions in the midst of productive farmland and leads to conflicts between the new, non-farm residents, and the farmer trying to make a living. Therefore, the theme of these policies might be stated as: “Not premature development, not leapfrog development, but development in its time.”

Farmland, Development Pressures, and Property Taxes

Another reason to discourage leapfrog growth is to curtail the development pressures that can force a farmer to “sell out to development” before he or she is ready to. When sprawling, leapfrog development places pressure on farmland, and nearby sales reflect increased property values, the county tax office may reflect this new value in the taxes assessed to the property. With the higher land value, an increasing portion of the farmer’s income must then go to pay taxes that, in turn, become an important factor in selling the farm. Even if “use value” tax assessments are applied, the on-going pressure of new development on adjoining properties may eventually push the farmer into selling out. Another factor not often realized is that sprawling development patterns are costly to serve, typically driving up the property tax *rate* for everyone in the county, including farmers.

The Alamance County Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program

In recent years, several North Carolina counties have implemented *agricultural preservation districts* to help protect farmland from the intrusion of non-farm developments. Alamance County is among those in the State having already established a program. Such programs involve the placement of signs along the roadside announcing to prospective developers and homebuyers that they are entering a designated agricultural preservation district. The intent of the program and these signs is to forewarn prospective homebuyers that if they build in this area, they should expect the types of activities associated with farming (i.e. dirt and dust, livestock waste and odors, farm machinery on the highway, etc.). The programs are thus designed to help ward off conflicts between new, non-farming residents and

surrounding farming interests.

Alamance County and the numerous farmland owners thus far participating in the program are to be commended for being among the first wave of counties in the State to establish an agricultural district preservation program. At the same time, all involved recognize that such programs do not offer the certainty or security of law (such as the protection offered by a zoning ordinance). They are, for the most part, voluntary and easily circumvented or ignored by motivated developers and homebuyers.

Infrastructure as a Catalyst for Suburban Sprawl

As noted in Section 1: **Preferred Development Pattern**, infrastructure improvements can exert a powerful influence on the location, timing and density of development. The construction of a new sewer line, for example, can cause higher density development to locate wherever access to the line is available. The construction of a new elementary school can cause new residential development to spring up all around it. A new park may be featured by developers in their sales brochures for nearby subdivision lots and homes. In this regard, the county must be careful not to employ infrastructure as “magnets” for growth and sprawl in prime agricultural areas. Rather, the County should work in coordination with municipalities, the school board, and other service providers to place such urban amenities at locations within or adjoining existing urban areas. In doing so, rural open spaces can be conserved, prime grazing lands will stay in pasture, the best farmland will stay under cultivation, and taxpayers won’t have to foot the bill for the high cost of providing services to sprawling areas.

AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL AREA PRESERVATION POLICIES

Policy 2.1: Agriculture and directly related residential activities shall be the preferred land uses in rural and active agricultural areas.

Policy 2.2: Rural and active agricultural area lands having a high productive potential shall be conserved, to the extent possible, for appropriate agricultural use.

Policy 2.3: Farms and woodlands shall be recognized as an integral part of the planning area's open space system.

Policy 2.4: County actions concerning infrastructure (e.g. schools, parks, utilities) and regulations shall serve to direct new development first to compact, targeted growth areas near existing towns, rather than “leapfrogging” to locations in the midst of farmland and greenspace.

Policy 2.5: County actions should provide protection to existing agricultural and woodland activities from incompatible land uses.

Policy 2.6: On-going efforts to strengthen and expand the County’s farmland preservation program shall be encouraged and supported.

Policy Section 3: Housing and Neighborhood Development

Current County Standards for Lot Sizes

As set forth in the County's subdivision regulations, Alamance County currently has the following standards for residential lot sizes, depending upon the circumstances of the lot:

<i>Water and Sewer Service Availability or Location Relative to Protected Watershed or Frontage on a Public Road</i>	<i>Minimum Lot Size</i>
Private Well and Septic Tank	30,000 ft ²
Community/Public Water and Septic System	20,000 ft ²
Community/Public Sewer and Private Well	10,000 ft ²
Community/Public Water and Sewer	8,000 ft ²
Any Lot Located on a Private Road, Regardless of Water and Sewer	1 acre
Any Lot Located in a Watershed Critical Area (WCA)	2 acres
Any Lot Located in the Balance of Watershed (BOW)	1 acre

Lot Sizes Relative to the Availability of Water And Sewer

These basic standards set the stage for most residential developments in rural Alamance County. Interestingly, all of the larger municipalities in Alamance County require that any development receiving their water and/or sewer services must be located within their corporate limits or extraterritorial planning jurisdiction. This means that to receive public water and sewer service, new developments must comply with the zoning and subdivision standards of the town providing the water and sewer.

Many developments in the County's planning jurisdiction have private wells and septic tanks. Therefore, many lots approved in the unincorporated county are 30,000 square feet or more in area. Only one location in the County's planning jurisdiction is served by both public water and public sewer—an area along NC 87 south of Graham leading to the high school there. However, these water and sewer lines are owned by the City of Burlington which, to date, has shown no interest in allowing properties along these lines to tap into them.

Also of interest, the Orange-Alamance Water System serves a small part of eastern Alamance County south of Interstate 40, enabling developments in this area to have lots as small as 20,000 square feet.

Lot Sizes and Their Influence on Development Patterns

From a planning standpoint, it is important to observe that three of the minimum lot sizes (i.e. 20,000, 30,000 square feet, and 1 acre) are neither urban nor rural in character. (Even a two-acre lot is not truly rural in character—lot sizes of five and ten acres are typically the minimum acreages associated with rural development.) Rather, these types of intermediate lot sizes have the unfortunate consequence of consuming a great deal of land per housing unit, and therefore result in a wasteful, sprawling development pattern. The good aspect of this situation, however, is that with such intermediate lot sizes, there is opportunity to encourage more desirable forms of development that consume less land while maintaining a relatively low density. Later in this section, one alternative to low-density sprawl is described: *greenspace development*.

Finally, it should be noted that the 1-acre minimum for lots located on a private road was originally instituted to discourage subdivisions with private roads and, conversely, to encourage subdivisions with public roads. However, it has had an unintended consequence—Alamance County has seen a proliferation of lots not in subdivisions with public roads, but rather, in 30,000 square foot parcels stripped along the county's existing public roadways. This issue is discussed in much greater detail in the section immediately following.

Recommendations Concerning Residential Development Standards in Alamance County

Prohibit Residential Strip Development from the County's Major Highways.

Alamance County has a duty to protect the traffic moving capability and safety of area roads. The County does this primarily through its subdivision regulations. One of the most basic ways of doing this is to manage the number of driveway cuts feeding on to the highway. Conversely, one of the surest ways to destroy the traffic moving capability of a road is to allow it to be interrupted by frequent driveways associated with strip development, whether commercial or residential. Unfortunately, many sections of primary roadways in Alamance County have already been stripped with residential development.²

From the developer's perspective, creating a series of residential lots along an existing road frontage eliminates the need to construct a new residential street, thereby saving development costs associated with new road construction. From the taxpayers' perspective, however, such strip residential development reduces the traffic moving capability of the road and compromises the public's investment in the road.

From the homeowner's perspective, such lots can force drivers to back out onto a major highway, creating opportunities for serious accidents. While such accidents may be few and far between when an area is first being developed, conditions may change markedly as the area becomes more fully developed and traffic volumes increase. In some instances, pressures for strip commercial development may ultimately displace some homeowners, creating an awkward and undesirable mix of residential and commercial development along the same stretch of highway.

Perhaps equally important, such strip development can also serve to "land lock" larger parcels lacking road frontage behind these residential lots. This can have the effect of diminishing the value of these larger parcels for farming or for potential major developments. For this reason, this plan recommends that such residential strip development, as implemented through new subdivision activity, be excluded from at least the County's primary road network.

Prohibit Flag Lots Along the County's Major Highways.

A variation of strip residential development which also seeks to unfairly utilize the public roadway while minimizing private investment is the use of the so-called "flag lot". Flag lots are so named because they typically have a very narrow road frontage leading back from the highway, which then open into the much wider "flag" portion of the lot away from the highway. This method of subdividing land can add even more individual driveways along the public road right-of-way, thereby further eroding the traffic moving capability of the highway. Alamance County should work to discourage the creation of flag lots, particularly along the primary roads of the County.

Strongly Discourage (or Prohibit) Unpaved Private Roads

One of the biggest issues concerning residential development in Alamance County today is the debate over unpaved private roads. Currently, County subdivision regulations require that public roads must be paved and must meet NCDOT standards. Private roads, on the other hand, need not be paved, and are subject to varying development standards based upon the number of lots served by the road. The County's regulations establish standards for private roads in three categories as follows:

² Examples of major roadways in Alamance County adversely affected by this form of strip residential development include Highway 70 from Haw River and Kirkpatrick Road.

<i>Type of Private Street</i>	<i>Number of lots served</i>	<i>Required to be paved?</i>	<i>Maintenance Agreement Required?</i>	<i>Homeowner's Association Required?</i>	<i>Meets NCDOT Standards</i>	<i>Meets County Standards</i>
Easement Only*	Up to 2 lots	No	Yes	No	No	No
Class I	Up to 4 lots	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Class II	5-14	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA

*Also referred to as an *unbuilt private road*

Thus, a new subdivision of up to 4 lots may have a private road that meets only the County's standards (i.e. a 50 foot right of way with a 10 foot gravel travel way.) Private easements serving only two lots need not meet any design standards whatsoever. Subdivisions of from 5 to 14 lots must meet NCDOT standards for minimum width and other factors, but still do not need to have a paved surface. These larger subdivisions must also have a homeowners association to make assessments for the maintenance of such roads.

Advocates on the side of allowing for unpaved roads argue that not everyone wants to live on a paved road. They would also argue that unpaved roads help keep development costs down and therefore help provide for affordable housing.

Opponents of unpaved roads argue that while they may sound good initially, too often they become maintenance "headaches" over the longer term. It is not unusual, for example, for the County to receive telephone calls from residents on poorly maintained private roads complaining about the condition of their road and asking what the County can do help. They may also inquire as to whether the County or the State will take over maintenance responsibilities for their substandard road. School buses may refuse to go down rutted, unpaved roads after a rain. Ambulance and fire truck access may also be hampered.

Thus, while developers can save money by building unpaved roads, such developers are out of the picture after they have sold the lots, and may then leave a legacy of poor roads to the residents of these neighborhoods.

This plan holds that allowing for unpaved roads for anything other than the smallest of subdivisions (i.e. a single lot split) is an example of failing to properly pay for infrastructure at the time of development and then postponing the costs of such infrastructure to a later date. The policies of this plan state that developers should bear the cost of infrastructure and services related to new development at the time of the initial development. Alamance County is not doing itself or its residents any favors by allowing substandard development into the County. Sooner or later such substandard development begins to deteriorate, taking the neighborhood and the County's tax base down with it. Other taxpayers wind up paying the bill because some developers and homebuyers want to get by "on the cheap".

Greenspace Development: An Alternative to Standard Suburban Subdivisions.

Greenspace Development Defined

Greenspace development is a term used to describe a form of residential development that retains a large proportion of its acreage in permanently dedicated greenspace (open space). Greenspace development achieves beneficial open space by clustering the homes of the development into a compact area, leaving the balance of the property in its natural state, or in improved open space such as a golf course, village green or town square. For example, if a developer had a five acre tract of land (about 217,800 square feet), instead of carving out ten lots of about 20,000 square feet each, he could cluster the ten homes on about one third of the land tract (about 71,874 square feet) and leave the remaining two-thirds of the tract (about 145,926 square feet) in permanently dedicated open space. In summary, the numbers would appear as follows:

	Conventional Development	Greenspace Development
Total acreage available	217,800 square feet	217,800 square feet
Total homes built	10	10
Acreage cleared for development	217,800 square feet	71,874 square feet
Acreage left in open space	0	145,926 square feet

Advantages of Greenspace Development

Greenspace development can minimize the environmental impacts of new development on land and water resources. It can also reduce the costs of providing public services to an area, thereby conserving tax dollars. From the private sector standpoint, greenspace development curtails many of the expenses associated with extending infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer to conventional, sprawling development. This reduces the developer's costs, ultimately making home ownership more affordable. Specific advantages of greenspace development are outlined as follows:

- *Streets are shorter, resulting in less paving and less stormwater run-off.*
- *Water and sewer lines are shorter, making for less costly infrastructure development and subsequent less costly maintenance of such pipes.*
- *Other utilities, such as telephone, TV cable, electricity, natural gas, are all less costly to install and maintain.*
- *Garbage collection is more efficient and therefore less costly.*
- *Mail delivery is more efficient and therefore less costly.*
- *School bus pickups are more efficient and therefore less costly.*
- *Greenspace development can help make alternatives to the automobile such as public transit, possible.*
- *When developed in conjunction with neighborhood shops (such as a grocery store, drug store, hardware store, etc.) other alternatives to the automobile such as a walking and bicycling also become possible. If accomplished on a widespread basis, this can result in significant decreases in traffic growth and congestion on major roadways in the county.*
- *Greenspace development allows the developer to place homes on the portion of any site most suited for development while leaving environmentally fragile or more costly areas (for example, steep slopes, wet soils) in permanent open space.*
- *Greenspace development draws neighbors closer together socially and provides for greater security and safety.*
- *Greenspace development can provide potential recreational opportunities to residents living within the neighborhood.*
- *Overall, studies have shown that greenspace development has a more favorable "tax to service cost ratio" for local government than conventional large lot development. This translates into greater efficiencies in local government service delivery, and ultimately, lower taxes for county property owners.*

Sewage Treatment and Greenspace Development

Some observers have noted that minimum land area requirements for septic tanks and their nitrification fields may ultimately be the controlling factor in determining the feasibility of greenspace developments. That is, the County normally requires 30,000 square feet as the minimum lot size for individual wells and septic tanks. On its face, this observation would seem to have merit. However, there are several ways of dealing with this issue:

- *Homes in a greenspace developments can be clustered in a compact grouping with each home's nitrification lines leading outward and away from the grouping.*
- *Larger developments can employ package treatment plants to serve the development.*
- *Community based, common (shared) nitrification fields can be employed to serve several homes via an interconnected collection system.*
- *The provision of central sewer service to any part of the county would eliminate the need for septic tanks at that location.*
- *As the area continues to grow, centralized sewer services may eventually be provided in the more urbanized parts of the county, thereby eliminating the need for septic tanks.*

Demand for Affordable Housing

The types of housing being offered in Alamance County are determined by a number of factors, including particularly, area wage rates and lenient development standards compared to nearby planning jurisdictions.

When compared to wages in nearby counties and in the State of North Carolina as a whole, wage rates are low for a large block of workers in Alamance County.³ These lower than average wage rates have resulted in a niche in the development marketplace for lower priced housing, including manufactured housing as well as modestly priced site built housing. The demand for manufactured housing is evidenced by the large number of mobile home placements in the county over the past several decades. It is apparent that the development community has responded to fill this demand for relatively inexpensive living space. Two other factors are the County's traditionally low property taxes and lenient development standards compared to other nearby jurisdictions. These last two factors have less to do with demand and more to do with cost, and will therefore be discussed later.

Manufactured/Affordable Housing is Needed

Perspectives on manufactured housing vary tremendously. On one hand, there is general consensus that manufactured housing fills a very real need for affordable housing for substantial numbers of people. Further, the manufactured home industry today is not the industry it once was. Manufacturing standards and methods have been upgraded, and the variety and quality of the end product has improved markedly. Also, the manufactured home industry has had a very active, effective lobby in Raleigh and at the local government level to change laws that would inhibit or exclude manufactured homes from an area. Foremost among these lobbying efforts has been the industry's successful campaign to see state legislation passed which invalidates and prevents exclusionary zoning practices that would completely prohibit the placement of manufactured homes in a community.

Manufactured Housing is Not Always Wanted "Next Door"

On the other hand, there is a long-standing stigma, whether based on real data or perceived concerns, that manufactured housing has a dampening affect on property values in its vicinity. Further, because of

³ Interestingly, average household incomes in Alamance County fare much better than wage rates when compared to State averages, largely due to the high percentage of two income (i.e. working wives) in the county.

this stigma, manufactured homes have traditionally been placed on large lots out in the country or clustered together in manufactured home parks. In either situation, the end result has been that manufactured homes often wind up being well removed from other developments and from services as well. This can further contribute to a pattern of sprawl or result in “leapfrog” development patterns. Thus, manufactured housing is often not favorably received by nearby, pre-existing, site-built neighborhoods. And, while most rural farm areas are generally quite accepting of manufactured housing on isolated lots, this acceptance can change if a manufactured home park is placed in the middle of productive farmland and is occupied by non-farming residents. The concern is that non-farm residents may complain about the noises, smells, dust and fertilizers inherent in farming, and can eventually begin to interfere with customary farming operations.⁴ Finally, there is the local government financial side of manufactured housing to consider. From a local government revenue standpoint, manufactured housing does not generate enough revenue in property taxes to pay for what it costs to serve it.⁵

Trend Toward Higher Standards for Manufactured Housing

For the past several decades, the manufactured housing industry has been working to overcome its former “tin can” image. In fact, it wasn’t until 1976 when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development set forth minimum standards for manufactured home construction that the industry’s image began to change for the better. Since that time, the quality and appearance of manufactured housing has steadily improved and continues to move toward higher standards. In general, the manufactured housing industry has recognized that it must do so to compete effectively in the marketplace for the housing dollar.

Alamance County Standards for Manufactured Housing Are Lenient

When compared to its neighboring counties, Alamance County has lenient standards for the design and placement of manufactured housing. While the County does have a special ordinance addressing *manufactured home parks*, even these standards are quite minimal. Interestingly, minimum space sizes for manufactured homes in a manufactured home park are the same as the minimum lot size for manufactured homes on individual lots—30,000 square feet if served by a septic system and well. (Also see section entitled *Current County Standards for Lot Sizes* for a more thorough discussion of maximum development densities in the County’s Planning Jurisdiction.) Reportedly, when the County took action to make the space requirements for manufactured home parks the same as for individual lots, there was a noticeable decline in the number of manufactured home parks being developed in the County.

Currently, individually sited manufactured homes, whether doublewide or singlewide, are permitted anywhere in unincorporated Alamance County. The placement of manufactured housing is therefore largely controlled by private restrictive covenants associated with individual subdivisions, over which the County has no involvement.

Likewise, the County has no particular *appearance* standards for manufactured housing, such as requiring a pitched roof or a permanent foundation with masonry skirting.

Recommendations Concerning Manufactured Housing

Zone certain areas for doublewide manufactured homes meeting higher appearance standards.

As noted above, Alamance County allows both singlewide and doublewide manufactured housing virtually anywhere in the county. This causes instability in property values due to the stigma, whether right or wrong, of having lower value, singlewide manufactured housing placed adjoining higher value, single-family site built homes. This plan therefore recommends that the County designate, through

⁴ By the way, these same concerns would be true of a site built residential subdivision. It’s just that you seldom see new manufactured home parks locating within an existing, heavily urbanized city or town. More often, they are out in the country.

⁵ This has been shown to be especially true in the area of school costs. In fact, studies have shown that most forms of residential development, including average, site-built single-family residences, “don’t pay their own way”. Most local governments generate a favorable cost/revenue balance from their farmland, their commercial and industrial tax bases, and from their most expensive residential areas. (See Policy Section on Paying for Growth for details.)

zoning, certain areas of the County for single-family site built housing, and compatible, doublewide manufactured housing. Such compatible doublewide manufactured housing should have, at a minimum, a permanent masonry foundation, pitched roof and overhang.⁶ Areas outside the single-family site built/double wide district would continue to be available for the placement of both doublewide and singlewide manufactured homes.

Adopt a Minimum Housing Code.

At present, Alamance County has no ability to condemn and remove abandoned or dilapidated structures that pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of county residents. Many cities and counties have adopted a minimum housing code, as authorized under State law, which enables them to deal with dangerous and unsightly structures.

Typically, when a violation is documented, the code enforcement officer sends, via registered mail, a notice of violation and a request for repair. If, after a reasonable period of time, the person responsible for the code violations refuses to correct the problem, the County can condemn the structure as unsuitable for habitation. Court action is then necessary for due process to occur prior to demolition and the placement of a lien against the property.

Even so, enforcement of a minimum housing code is not as straightforward as it seems. Some dilapidated structures, despite their deplorable condition, may provide a roof over someone's head. When a structure is occupied, the County will find itself walking a fine line between forcing the landlord to act responsibly to fix the structure or requiring that the structure be removed, thereby causing a person or family to relocate. There are also a great many private property rights and issues involved in enforcing a minimum housing code, necessitating considerable time in correspondence, site visits, notices, court actions, and meetings to resolve the problem. Yet most local governments who have enacted such codes have concluded that allowing structures to persist in their community is worse than the effort necessary to get rid of them. Therefore, if dilapidated and abandoned housing is ever to be eradicated from the County's jurisdiction, some form of minimum housing code will have to be adopted and implemented.

Withhold Issuance of Permit for New Manufactured Home Until Old Unit is Properly Disposed Of.

The previous recommendation is intended to remove dilapidated structures from the county. The following recommendation is intended to prevent their occurrence in the first place.

To avoid the creation of still more abandoned structures in the unincorporated County, the County should adopt a policy of not issuing occupancy permits for new structures until, for example, the older abandoned structure on the same site has either been moved and rehabilitated on a new site, or hauled off and disposed of properly. This policy has proven effective in other counties by preventing owners of older mobile homes from simply pushing the dilapidated structure to the rear of the site and placing a newer mobile home on the front of the site. In other situations, property owners have been known to run drop cords out to the old mobile home, illegally renting an unauthorized dwelling. In still other instances, the old mobile home may become an unsightly storehouse for junk or other materials—in violation of the state building code. Withholding the permit for a new structure until the old structure has been disposed of has proven quite effective. In Halifax County, for example, an estimated 200 older structures were either relocated and reused or hauled off and disposed of properly in the first two years of implementing such a policy.

⁶ Studies have shown that a manufactured home on a permanent masonry foundation usually has a greater initial value, and maintains its value much better than a manufactured home with only a temporary or vinyl skirt. Permanent masonry foundations, along with other improved standards for roof pitch, eave overhang, siding materials, building orientation and other factors help remove the stigma of manufactured housing. They also make manufactured homes more compatible with nearby site built homes, and contribute in a positive way to the stabilization of property values.

Future Demand: Smaller Homes, Close to Services

The irony in the previous discussion is that while manufactured housing is often placed in locations well removed from urban services, future demand for such smaller homes will be very close to services. Over the next several decades (through about the year 2030) the elderly population of the United States is going to grow exponentially. As the baby boom generation, now middle aged, reaches its retirement years, the ability of our society to deal with the living needs of the elderly will be severely stressed. If this trend continues, suburban and rural homes, now occupied by baby boomers and their families, will eventually be filled with elderly residents who can no longer drive their cars. Homes in these typical single-family developments will be inconvenient to shopping and medical facilities. Despite the obvious need, bus service, if available at all, will be very expensive to provide. This will be due to the inefficiencies and high costs of serving these large-lot and/or sprawling areas. Group housing and nursing homes, costly even today, will likely be unable to meet the long-term care needs of the multitudes. Several solutions to this problem are offered in the paragraphs immediately following.

Affordable Housing: Accessory and Infill Housing

The single-family house on the individual lot has been part of the American dream for at least the past fifty years. But such housing, whether site built or manufactured, may not be the best form of affordable housing available to meet the coming challenge of housing a burgeoning senior citizen population. Addressing this problem may require some new, *old* ways of thinking about how neighborhoods are built. *Accessory or "infill" housing* provides an opportunity to address this problem. Specifically, this term refers to old notions of extended families sharing residency on a single property: granny flats, basement or upstairs apartments, garage apartments, and ground level additions are all forms of *accessory housing*.

Many residential lots in Alamance County, for example, are 20,000 to 40,000 square feet or more per lot. The size of these lots affords ample opportunity for attractively designed garage apartments or detached granny flats. Small accessory apartments could also be built within the walls of the main house or built on as an addition. Regardless of the approach used, such units would be highly affordable to build, because there would be no additional land costs. In the event that the accessory unit were leased to a paying tenant, rent from the accessory unit would absorb some of the land cost associated with the main house, thereby making both housing units more affordable. (By the way, these are not new concepts by any means. Consider the "carriage house" of one hundred fifty years ago.)

Other Advantages of Accessory and Infill Housing

Accessory or infill housing offers several other advantages, both social and economic. First, such housing could provide for the healthy mixing of young and old. The once traditional supportive relationship between the elderly, the middle aged, and the young would again be restored, passing the wisdom and experiences of our elders onto the next generation. Second, public transit, considered uneconomical to operate in many cities, much less suburban and other low-density rural areas, could become more feasible to operate with the addition of more housing units in the same area of land. Third, the addition of public transit would not only meet the needs of the non-driving elderly population, but would also encourage working age people to use the bus system. Fourth, from the developer's perspective, many more affordable housing units could be provided without the cost of building expensive infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, power and telephone lines, etc.) Fifth, from the property owner's perspective, supervision of a tenant, if applicable, would be relatively automatic given the full time presence of the owner in the main residence. And sixth, the community's costs of servicing the population and maintaining the infrastructure would remain relatively constant, despite the larger numbers of people served.

Interestingly, Alamance County, in the absence of many development standards, allows two manufactured homes per residential lot so long as (1) requirements for water and sewer can be met and (2) the lot is not located within a protected watershed. If and when development standards are drafted, care should be taken to incorporate a provision for accessory housing into, for example, a new zoning ordinance.

Surge of Housing Development in the Newlin and Thompson Townships

Recent years have witnessed the rapid growth and development of the southern and eastern portions of Alamance County (Newlin and Thompson Townships) where access and travel time to job centers in Orange County and the Research Triangle Park are most convenient. The most recent census data available reveals that about one half of the county's labor force travels outside the county to work. This percentage is likely to increase substantially in coming years as the pace of growth in housing is rapidly turning these areas into bedroom communities for Chapel Hill and other Triangle area locations. Mounting pressures for commercial developments to serve these residents, and for infrastructure to support this growth (i.e. enhanced water, sewer, road improvements, schools and parks) will increase proportionately. The fiscal and service implications of this area continuing to develop as a bedroom community are more fully discussed under the Policy Section on Paying for Growth.

Compact Growth Near Existing Community Centers Preferred

In keeping with the more compact "town and country" growth pattern recommended by this plan, the County should discourage the development of isolated residential areas, remote from services. Rather, the County should encourage new residential development to locate in or near existing towns or other community centers. Ideally, different parts of the county should have different housing types at different densities to meet differing housing needs. Alamance County policies should encourage the provision of many housing types to accommodate a variety of buyers at various income levels and tastes. Within such areas, the County should support a wide range of residential development forms, including site built single family and multi-family units, as well as manufactured homes in well-planned developments.

In summary, the issue is not whether people are going to continue to move to Alamance County, but how the county intends to accommodate them. The issue is not whether additional residential development is going to happen, but rather, where the county chooses to encourage it and in what form.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy 3.1: The County shall encourage development to occur at densities appropriate for their location. Location factors shall include whether the development is within an environmentally sensitive area, the type of sewage treatment available to the site, and the proximity of the site to existing urban services.

Policy 3.2: Developments in the unincorporated county shall be encouraged to employ greenspace development as an environmentally sound, economically cost effective, and visually attractive alternative to large lot sprawl.

Policy 3.3: The protection and rehabilitation of viable neighborhoods shall be encouraged to ensure their continued existence as a major housing source. Housing shall be required to meet or exceed minimum standards for health, safety and welfare.

Policy 3.4: Proposed residential development that would expose residents to the harmful effects of incompatible development or to environmental hazards shall be prohibited. This would include, for example, residential development in locations adversely impacted by proximity to the airport.

Policy 3.5: Alamance County shall reserve appropriate areas of the unincorporated area for site built housing and compatible doublewide manufactured housing. The County shall apply construction and site development standards in these specially designated areas to include, for example, requirements for a permanent masonry foundation and a pitched roof and overhang. In other areas of the County, improved appearance standards for manufactured housing (e.g. underskirting) shall be established and applied.

Policy 3.6: Alamance County shall not allow the inappropriate use of manufactured or site built homes for storage, illegal occupancy or their abandonment without proper disposal.

Policy 3.7: Innovative and flexible land planning and development practices shall be encouraged to create neighborhoods which better safeguard land, water, energy and historic resources.

Policy 3.8: Factors in determining preferred locations for higher density residential development shall include: close proximity to employment and shopping centers, access to major thoroughfares and transit systems, the availability of public services and facilities, and compatibility with adjacent areas and land uses.

Policy 3.9: All forms of housing development should be discouraged from “leapfrogging” into the countryside, thereby destroying the rural character of Alamance County, breaking up farmland, and making the provision of urban services more costly to homebuyers and taxpayers.

Policy 3.10: Alamance County shall seek to accommodate the development and appropriate placement of a variety of housing types, including site built homes, apartments, townhouses, granny flats, garage apartments, accessory living units, and manufactured homes.

Policy 3.11: So as to preserve the traffic moving function of the County’s primary roads, prevent traffic accidents and avoid land locking interior land parcels, Alamance County shall discourage residential and commercial strip development along the county’s primary roads. Flag lots shall also not be permitted along primary roads unless justified by unusual or unforeseeable parcel or topographic constraints.

Policy 3.12: New residential developments, other than a single lot split, shall provide for the installation of paved public roadway and drainage infrastructure at the time of development. This policy is intended to prevent the creation of substandard developments that must later correct for infrastructure problems that could have been avoided, had they been installed properly from the beginning.

Policy Section 4: Commercial and Office Development

Citizen concerns about commercial development typically revolve mainly around two issues: (1) that commercial development, when allowed to strip the area’s highways unchecked, can destroy the traffic moving capability of the affected highway, and (2) that commercial development, if developed according to the “least common denominator” (lowest standards) for signs and landscaping, creates ugly highway corridors through the community.

The bottom line is that while most residents support the development of a wide range of shopping and services, they do not favor the stripping of the county’s roadways with commercial development from one end to the other. Commercial strip development, with its traffic congestion, travel delays, glaring plastic signs, lack of landscaping, and the “sea of asphalt” parking lots adjoining the highway are characteristics of a style of commercialism that most residents would rather do without.

Fortunately, from a planning perspective, beneficial commercial development can be accommodated in a manner that adds value to a community, and avoids most of the pitfalls noted above. Positive measures that can be taken include:

- *Zoning can direct new commercial development to locations in existing town and community centers, thereby preserving the rural, open character of the county’s highways. This policy also curtails the abandonment of older strip centers (and the creation of vacant storefronts) where retailers are continually moving to “greener retail pastures” elsewhere.*

- *When planning a new development from the outset, pedestrian-scaled commercial uses can be incorporated into the “village center” within walking and biking distance of most of the homes in the development. It is important, however, that any such commercial development be designed with a pedestrian orientation, with residentially scaled architecture, buildings pulled up to the sidewalk and street, parking and other asphalt areas minimized, low key signage and lighting, etc.*
- *When commercial development must occur along a “country” highway, it should be clustered at the intersection of two roads, thereby allowing for access from four directions. This also avoids concentrating all vehicular turning movements on a single roadside, and over a period of years, will eventually result in the need for fewer traffic signals.*
- *Commercial signage can be required to occur as ground level, monument style signs, rather than plasticized, elevated pole mounted or lolly-pop signs.*
- *Parking lots can be placed to the side or even the rear of commercial buildings, thereby bringing the architecture rather than the asphalt closer to the traveling public.*
- *Parking lots of adjoining businesses should be connected so as to avoid a multitude of unnecessary and unsafe vehicular turning movements in and out of businesses along a busy highway.*
- *Given the high visibility of most commercial developments, it is reasonable to expect that a fair amount of landscaping and trees should be required. Such landscaping can also double its value by absorbing and retaining stormwater runoff from parking areas, thereby helping to prevent further degradation of the county’s surface waters.*
- *A row of trees or other natural buffer strip can be left along both sides of the highway, thereby creating the striking illusion of driving through a corridor of trees, rather than a corridor of asphalt. This natural buffer area can also be instrumental in reducing stormwater runoff.*

It is important to note that all of the above measures are fully within the planning enabling legislation for counties as authorized by the State of North Carolina. It requires only the resolve of the County to put these measures in place through local zoning, or other lawful regulatory measures.

Regarding office and institutional development, this plan recommends that offices be used as a logical buffer between large-scale commercial uses and residential uses. This may allow office and commercial uses to be within walking distance of homes, a feature particularly beneficial to Alamance County’s growing ranks of senior citizens, who will at some point in their lives, be unable to drive to basic services. It also creates the opportunity for area residents to walk to places of employment, either in offices or at commercial establishments.

COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy 4.1: Commercial and office development shall be encouraged to locate in mixed-use shopping centers and office parks to minimize the proliferation of strip development.

Policy 4.2: Large commercial centers should be located adjacent to the intersections of major roadways and convenient to potential mass transit routes; planned concentrations of employment and housing should be encouraged to locate convenient to these centers.

Policy 4.3: Incompatible commercial encroachment within or immediately adjoining existing residential areas shall be prohibited. Such incompatible encroachments often include, but are not limited to, automobile oriented uses such as service stations, car lots, convenient food marts, car washes, drive through restaurants, and the like.

Policy 4.4: Mixed-use developments, planned from the outset, which allow for a compatible mixture of uses with a pedestrian scale and design, are encouraged. Similarly, businesses may be located adjoining (and therefore convenient to) an existing residential area, when such businesses can be shown to satisfy design considerations similar to a newly planned, pedestrian-scaled, mixed use development.

Policy 4.5: Neighborhood and convenience commercial centers should be encouraged to locate at the intersection of a collector street or secondary street with a street of equal or greater size. They may also be near other neighborhood facilities such as schools and parks.

Policy 4.6: Highway oriented commercial uses should be clustered along segments of highways and contain land uses which are mutually compatible and reinforcing in use and design; they should be designed in such a way as to minimize signage, access points, and uncontrolled strip development. (See esp., Policy 4.10 below concerning connected parking areas.)

Policy 4.7: Strip development along the area's major streets and highways shall be discouraged. Existing strip development shall be reduced and/or development standards should be made more restrictive when redevelopment opportunities permit. New strip development on isolated single lots along major streets and highways shall be discouraged.

Policy 4.8: Attractive, environmentally beneficial landscaping shall be provided by new commercial or office developments, and in the rehabilitation and upgrading of existing developments. Effective buffering shall be provided when commercial or office development adjoins existing or planned residential uses.

Policy 4.9: Office and institutional development shall be encouraged to locate as a transitional land use between residential areas and commercial and industrial activities of higher intensity, where appropriate. "Activities of higher intensity" are typically automobile oriented commercial development but may also include heavily traveled thoroughfares.

Policy 4.10: Businesses shall be encouraged to coordinate their site designs with other nearby businesses. Design factors should include, at a minimum, shared or connected parking and access, convenient pedestrian and vehicular movement, and consistent sign standards.

Policy Section 5: Industrial Development

Support for economic development was made evident during the early public input meetings for the Strategic Plan, as many residents continue to place a high priority on economic growth and diversification, as well as better paying jobs. At the same time, it is probably fair to say that most area residents believe that all new development, including industrial development, should be designed and located in a way that does not compromise environmental quality concerns. In other words, Alamance County residents favor the economic growth that would occur as a result of new business or industry, but are cautious about accepting just any industry in any location.

"Clean" Vs. "Dirty" Industry and the Use of Performance Standards

Regarding the issue of "clean" vs. "dirty" industry, emerging new industries are often difficult to characterize in today's rapidly changing national and global economy. Rather than attempting to stereotype a particular industry as clean or dirty, it is more constructive to think in terms of the actual impacts that any given industry may generate in terms of, for example, air particulate matter, water contaminants, water consumption, solid waste produced, heavy truck traffic generated, etc. To address these impacts, numerically based performance standards may be implemented through the zoning ordinance to spell out the reasonable limits that the County is willing to accept in each of these various areas of impact. Of course for such performance standards to be applicable throughout the county, zoning would also have to be applicable throughout the county.

Locational Criteria for Industry

Regarding the location of new industry generally, the accompanying Policies call for advanced planning to identify future industrial sites. In terms of specific locational standards, the policies place industrial and industrially related activities into one of four categories:

Heavy industries, for example, are generally characterized as having large physical plants, extensive land requirements and low worker to land ratios. Due to their large land requirements and their higher potential for adverse environmental impacts, heavy industries should be directed to locations remote from existing incompatible, non-industrial land uses. As used here, incompatible, non-industrial uses may include residential areas and certain types of office, institutional, commercial uses not related to the support of the industry. At the same time, some forms of office and commercial development may serve as an appropriate transitional land use between the heavy industry and nearby residential areas. Heavy industries should also have direct access (i.e. without passing through a residential or incompatible commercial area.) to major transportation facilities, including highway and rail service. In addition to providing convenient access to the heavy industry, such transportation facilities may also act as a buffer or transitional land use between the heavy industry and non-industrial land uses on the other side of a major (divided) highway or rail line.

Light industries are generally characterized as having smaller physical plants, lower land requirements and higher worker to land ratios. Light industries may also produce a product that has a higher value per unit weight or volume compared to the products of heavy industry. Since light industries typically do not require large land areas, and traditionally have a lower potential for adverse environmental impacts, they can be more easily located within an urban area. Their flexibility in location enables them to take maximum advantage of available services and to minimize home to work travel distances. Even so, light industries should have easy access to major highway facilities, and if possible, rail and air facilities. Care should be taken to see that light industries are located so as not to introduce additional traffic onto residential streets. When properly designed and sited, light industrial sites can be compatible with nearby residential areas.

Warehousing, storage and distribution facilities are an essential component of most urbanizing areas and have traditionally been accommodated within areas planned for both heavy and light industry. In the past few decades, however, many new forms of warehousing, storage and distribution facilities have emerged in the development marketplace. Mini-warehouses, for example, have become common features in nearly all communities today. When these new warehousing facilities occur along major thoroughfares in a community, it is important that they are properly landscaped and buffered so as not to detract from the overall image of the area.

Business or Industrial Parks are typically carefully planned developments designed to accommodate several businesses or light industries in a well organized setting. Such business parks should be encouraged to allow for a limited number of non-industrial service-oriented uses, such as restaurants and convenience stores. (If a business park has no eating establishments, for example, workers are forced to get in their car just to buy lunch.)

Summary

In final analysis, factors used to identify land appropriate for industrial use need to focus on rail sidings, road access, water, sewer, natural gas, electric utilities, soil suitability, topography, avoidance of the floodplain and environmentally sensitive areas, and other physical factors. Concern for compatibility with nearby residential development must also be given priority consideration.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy 5.1: The County shall encourage a public service and regulatory environment conducive to industrial development, compatible with environmental quality considerations and the availability of public financial resources.

Policy 5.2: Industrial development should not be located in areas that would diminish the desirability of existing and planned non-industrial uses, nor shall incompatible non-industrial uses be allowed to encroach upon existing or planned industrial sites.

Policy 5.3: Industrial development shall be located on land that is physically suitable and has unique locational advantages for industry. Advanced planning for the identification of such land shall be encouraged.

Policy 5.4: Heavy industrial uses shall be separated from incompatible, non-industrial areas by natural and man-made features such as green belts, major transportation facilities, transitional land uses, and/or other suitable means.

Policy 5.5: Light industrial uses may be located in or near existing built up areas to take advantage of available services and to minimize home to work distances. Careful design and/or buffering shall be required to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.

Policy 5.6: Warehousing, storage and distribution facilities shall have access to appropriate thoroughfares, and shall be visually buffered according to their location.

Policy 5.7: New industrial development shall be encouraged to locate in existing and/or planned mixed-use industrial parks.

Policy 5.8: Facilities for the disposal of hazardous waste, whether chemical, biological, radioactive or other, shall not be located in Alamance County.

Policy Section 6: Transportation

Regional Transportation Setting

As discussed in the Policy Section on Economic Development, Alamance County is located in the midst of the Piedmont Crescent, and is at a good distribution point in the Carolinas. Immediately to the east lies the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, including Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh, plus an ever-expanding urban area around the Research Triangle Park. Immediately to the west is the center of the Piedmont Triad, including the urbanizing areas of Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem. Interstates 85 and 40 run through the heart of the county on an east–west axis, linking these two urbanizing areas together and placing Alamance County in a strategically important position.

History of Transportation Planning in Alamance County

Comprehensive transportation planning in Alamance County began in the late 1950's and has continued over the years to keep pace with the growth of the area. The following is an overview of transportation planning over the past five decades:

1957	Thoroughfare plan prepared for City of Burlington
Early 60's	Joint thoroughfare planning includes Burlington and Graham
Late 60's	Elon College and Gibsonville join in a new thoroughfare plan update
Early 70's	1970 Census results in the designation of an "urbanized area", including Haw River
1975	New thoroughfare plan update
Early 80's	1980 Census includes Mebane in the urbanized area
1986	New thoroughfare plan update.
1990	Revisions to the 1986 Plan include Western Loop; 1990 Census redefines urban area.
1990's	New travel demand model created; Green Level, Whitsett, Village of Alamance added
1998	Burlington designated as the Lead Planning Agency
1999	New thoroughfare plan update

Burlington-Graham Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The *Burlington-Graham Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)* is the officially designated body responsible for administering the area's transportation planning process required under Federal law. The MPO plans for transportation needs on a regional basis, including highway, transit, air, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Member local governments participating in the MPO include nine municipalities plus the County. They are:

- Alamance County
- Village of Alamance
- City of Burlington
- Town of Elon
- Town of Gibsonville
- City of Graham
- Town of Green Level
- Town of Haw River
- City of Mebane
- Town of Whitsett

In addition to these local governments, portions of eastern Guilford and western Orange Counties are also included in the MPO planning area.

Transportation planning for the MPO is handled by a two-tiered structure made up of elected officials at the policy level and professional staff at the technical level. The upper, policy-oriented tier is called the *Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)* and includes elected officials from each participating local government plus a representative from Division 7 of the NCDOT Board of Transportation.

The lower, technical-oriented tier is called the *Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)*, and includes professional staff from each participating local government, plus State, regional and Federal government professional staff.

The City of Burlington is the lead planning agency for the MPO, providing administrative support to the two-tiered organization. The City is also primarily responsible for annual preparation of the Unified Planning Work Program (PWP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Burlington is the primary local recipient of planning funds received from USDOT for the Burlington-Graham Urban Area. The Piedmont Triad Council of Governments serves as the intergovernmental review agency for transportation planning in the region.

Initiative to Expand the Geographic Area for Transportation Planning

Recently, the Transportation Advisory Committee has been exploring an initiative that would expand the planning area for the MPO “wall to wall” from north to south in Alamance County⁷. (At present, the planning area for the MPO roughly straddles the I-85/I-40 corridor through the mid-section of the County.)

As an alternative to expanding the MPO, there have also been discussions concerning the creation of an “RPO” (Rural Planning Organization) to which the unincorporated portions of Alamance County would become a member. RPO’s are a relatively new concept, enabled through legislation of the State of North Carolina to allow rural counties to band together for joint transportation planning.

Based on the current understanding of these two courses of action, this plan would encourage Alamance County to add the unincorporated portions of the county to join the existing MPO, if possible, rather than joining in the creation of a new RPO. There are several reasons for this. First, the rural areas of Alamance County, for the most part, relate functionally to the Burlington-Graham urban area. Second, Alamance County is already represented on the MPO, thereby avoiding the need to create another governmental entity for transportation planning. Third, the RPO concept would appear to be better suited to rural counties that do not have a major metropolitan center consuming a sizeable portion of the county. Fourth, the MPO agency is backed by federal authority and legislation, while the RPO is a creature of State authority and legislation. Finally, there may be some logic to having the entire county in a single planning organization from the standpoint of air quality management. (As Federal air quality standards are tightened, and area transportation levels intensify, it is highly probable that Alamance County will soon come under stricter federal air quality-related controls.) For all of these reasons, this plan affirms the initiative of the Transportation Advisory Committee in expanding the planning area of the MPO to include all of Alamance County.

The 2000-2025 Burlington-Graham Urban Area Transportation Plan Update⁸

The most recent Transportation Plan Update for the Burlington-Graham Urban Area was completed in 1999. The plan recommended highway, pedestrian, bicycle and other improvements for proper traffic circulation and area-wide mobility through the year 2025. Part of the work leading up to the plan’s preparation was a 1997 Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Questionnaire developed by the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments. Some of the major findings of the survey included:

- The locations for *traffic congestion* most frequently mentioned by survey respondents were:
 1. Huffman Mill Road at Church Street, Garden Road, I-85, and Mebane Street
 2. Chapel Hill Road or Highway 54 at Mebane Street
 3. Mebane Street at Alamance Road, Chapel Hill Road and Huffman Mill Road
 4. Church Street (North and South) or Highway 70 at Huffman Mill Road, Garden Road, Alamance Road, and St. Mark’s Church road
- The top *environmental and preservation* issues were:
 1. Preserving natural areas, open space or farmland
 2. Improving air quality by reducing traffic congestion
 3. Preserving existing homes and businesses

⁷ There is some question as to whether the more rural areas of Alamance County would meet the population density/urban developed criteria for inclusion in an MPO. This may be a stumbling block in gaining approval for including these areas.

⁸ In recent years, there has been a marked movement toward the preparation of *transportation* plans, as opposed to more narrowly focused *thoroughfare* plans. In the latter case, the plan is oriented almost exclusively toward streets and highways, while in the former, alternative transportation modes like bikeways, mass transit, water borne transportation, air travel, and pedestrian needs are given consideration. In fact, the “thoroughfare plan” of former times is now considered just one element of a comprehensive transportation plan.

- Respondents ranked alternative transportation and land use issues in the following order:
 1. Walking and biking safely
 2. Building sidewalks, crosswalks and greenways
 3. Providing opportunities for car and van pooling
 4. Building bicycle lanes and trails
 5. Encouraging transit friendly higher density development
 6. Living closer to where you work

- The top ten transportation issues overall were:
 1. Improving traffic signal timing and coordination
 2. Reducing or managing traffic congestion
 3. Preserving natural areas, open space or farmland
 4. Improving air quality by reducing traffic congestion
 5. Walking and biking safety
 6. Providing transit services for the elderly
 7. Preserving existing homes and businesses
 8. Widening existing streets
 9. Reducing personal transportation expenses
 10. Building sidewalks, crosswalks and greenways

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

While the bulk of the Transportation Plan Update provides the research and rationale to recommend an overall plan and necessary highway improvements for the area, the State's Transportation Improvement Program is the mechanism by which the most important projects are "put in the pipeline" for construction.

The TIP, as it is commonly referred to, is a cooperative priority-setting process involving the State DOT and the local governments forming the Burlington-Graham Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The TIP sets forth those transportation projects which, based on a variety of criteria, are to receive priority for funding over the ensuing seven-year period for each MPO in the state.

At their regular meeting in November, 2001 representatives of the Burlington-Graham Urban Area Transportation Advisory Committee voted to approve a *TIP Project Priority List* for the MPO. The list included the following five projects:

1. NC 119
2. Cook Road
3. Mebane Street
4. NC 54
5. Grand Oaks Boulevard

Full Listing of Projects in the 2002-2008 TIP

Beyond the top five projects listed above, the 2002-2008 TIP for the Burlington-Graham Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization includes the following highway projects:

ROUTE/CITY	LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION
US 70	SR 3056 IN GUILFORD COUNTY TO SR 1309 IN ALAMANCE COUNTY. WIDEN TO FIVE LANES WITH CURB AND GUTTER.
NC 49-62	US 70 IN HAW RIVER TO US 158 IN YANCEYVILLE. UPGRADE ROADWAY AND CONSTRUCT MULTI-LANES AT SELECTED LOCATIONS.
NC 54	SR 2106 (WHITTEMORE LOOP) TO NC 119. WIDEN TO FIVE LANES WITH CURB AND GUTTER.

NC 87	SR 1547 IN ALAMANCE COUNTY TO US 29 IN REIDSVILLE. WIDEN TO MULTI-LANES.
BURLINGTON	COMPUTERIZED SIGNAL SYSTEM.
BURLINGTON GRAHAM	SR 1716 (GRAHAM-HOPEDALE ROAD), PROVIDENCE ROAD TO US 70 WIDEN TO MULTI-LANES WITH A RAILROAD GRADE SEPARATION
BURLINGTON	ST. MARKS CHURCH ROAD, SR 1146 (KIRKPATRICK ROAD) TO US 70. MULTI-LANES ON NEW LOCATION; WITH AN INTERCHANGE AT I-40/85.
BURLINGTON	NC 62 (ALAMANCE ROAD), SR 1430 (RAMADA ROAD) TO US 70 (CHURCH STREET). WIDEN TO FIVE LANES WITH CURB AND GUTTER.
BURLINGTON	NC 54, NC 100 (MAPLE AVENUE) TO US 70 (CHURCH STREET). WIDEN TO FIVE LANES WITH CURB AND GUTTER.
BURLINGTON	NEW ROUTE, US 70 TO NC 100. MULTI-LANES, PART ON NEW LOCATION.
BURLINGTON	SR 1306-SR 1363 (MEBANE STREET), SR 1158 (HUFFMAN MILL ROAD) TO NC 54 (CHAPEL HILL ROAD) WIDEN TO FIVE LANES
BURLINGTON	GRAND OAKS BOULEVARD EXTENSION, SR 1146 (KIRKPATRICK ROAD) TO NC 62 (ALAMANCE ROAD). WIDEN TO MULTI-LANES, SOME NEW LOCATION.
BURLINGTON	SOUTHERN LOOP, NC 62 AT GRAND OAKS BOULEVARD TO NC 87. WIDEN TO MULTI-LANES AND CONSTRUCT MULTI-LANE CONNECTORS ON NEW LOCATION.
ELON COLLEGE	ELON COLLEGE BYPASS, NC 100 WEST) TO NC 100 (EAST). TWO LANES ON NEW LOCATION.
GRAHAM	MAPLE STREET EXTENSION TO NC 87 AT MOORE STREET. TWO LANES ON NEW LOCATION.
MEBANE	US 70, HAW RIVER BYPASS TO MEBANE CITY LIMITS WIDEN TO MULTI-LANES.
MEBANE	NC 119 RELOCATION, I-85 TO SOUTH OF SR 1917. MULTI-LANES ON NEW LOCATION.
MEBANE	SR 1007 (MEBANE OAKS ROAD), I-85 TO NC 119 (FIFTH STREET). WIDEN TO FIVE LANES.
SR 1530	HAW RIVER. REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 13
SR 2312	ALAMANCE CREEK. REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 106
I-40/I-85	I-40 WB/I-85 SB RAMPS AT NC 119. INSTALL FULLY ACTUATED TRAFFIC SIGNAL AND COORDINATE WITH SIGNAL AT ADJACENT RAMP TERMINAL.
BURLINGTON	NC 62 (RAUHUT STREET) AND HATCH ROAD. INSTALL TRAFFIC SIGNAL WITH PEDESTRIAN HEADS.
BURLINGTON	SR 1363 (SOUTH MEBANE STREET) AT TRAIL TWO. INSTALL TRAFFIC SIGNAL.
GIBSONVILLE	SOUTH JOYNER STREET AT NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY CROSSING 722 987D. SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS. RAIL PASSENGER CROSSING.
GIBSONVILLE	EAST JOYNER STREET AT NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY CROSSING 722 987D. INSTALL AUTOMATIC WARNING DEVICES.
ELON COLLEGE	CLOSURE OF THE ANTIOCH STREET CROSSING 722 996C AND CROSSING MITIGATION PROJECT.

Highlights of Some On-Going Transportation Improvement Projects

Most highway improvement projects within Alamance County are focused within the planning jurisdictions of area municipalities. The following is a summary of a few of the most significant projects underway at present:

St. Marks Church Road: Build A New Multi-Lane Roadway and Interchange with I-40/85

This new roadway section will form a critical link in the outer loop around the western side of Burlington. This 2.6 mile long section will swing an arc from US 70 on the west side of Burlington south and east to Kirkpatrick Road south of I-40/85. In doing so it will form a new interchange with the interstate, and prompt development interest in the area. City of Burlington officials have therefore been discussing the future land use for the area. While the interests of the real estate market may gravitate toward commercial and retail development, long term planning for the area might be better served by light industrial businesses.

Grand Oaks Boulevard Extension: Widen to Multi-Lanes with Some on New Location

This project begins where St. Marks Church Road leaves off, and continues the outer loop even further to the east along the south side of Burlington. This 1.1-mile section begins at Kirkpatrick Road south of the interstate and ends at its intersection with Alamance Road (NC62) due north of Burlington Airport.

NC 54, East of Burlington: Widen to Five Lanes with Curb and Gutter.

NC 54 (Chapel Hill Road) is a heavily traveled corridor running between Burlington and Chapel Hill. The project, now under way, will widen the highway from its current 2-lane cross section to four lanes with a central turning lane. The widening would begin at SR 2106 just east of the NC 54 interchange with I-40/85 and would continue for three miles southeast to the intersection of NC 54 with NC 119.

NC119 Relocation: Multi-Lanes on New Location West of Mebane.

The present route of NC 119 takes it through the heart of Mebane. This project will create a more direct route for travelers on NC 119, bypassing Mebane to the west. Beginning just north of its interchange with I-40/85, the new NC 119 will run directly north, crossing US 70 well to the west of downtown Mebane, and rejoining the existing NC 119 north of town. Local planning officials intend that the land area adjoining the new roadway south of US 70 will be primarily light industrial with very little commercial. Land areas north of US 70 along the new roadway will have only limited development because this section passes through a critical watershed area.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Element of the Transportation Plan Update

The 2000-2025 Transportation Plan Update for the Burlington-Graham Urban Area included excerpts from the Alamance County Urban Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, adopted September 22, 1994. Local governments participating in the plan included Burlington, Elon, Gibsonville, Graham, Haw River and Mebane. The plan identified two types of bicycle projects: independent and incidental. Independent projects are stand-alone bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Incidental projects are improvements tied to specific road projects. Key projects identified in the 1994 plan were as follows:

(Continued on next page)

1994 Alamance County Urban Area Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan Recommendations (Excerpts)

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Facility Type</i>	<i>Proposed Improvement</i>	<i>Cost Est. 1994</i>
Burlington	City Park	Off-road bike path	Install off-road bike facility	\$30,500
Burlington	O'Neal St. ext TIP #E-3126	Off road bike/ pedestrian facility	Install off-road bike/ pedestrian path	\$30,500
Burlington	O'Neal St. ext TIP #E-3126	Connector for City- wide bike corridor	Greenway	\$80,000
Elon College & Burlington	Proposed W Alamance Pkwy to Medical Center	Municipal bike path	Pedestrian and bicycle facility	\$265,00 0
Elon College & Burlington	Williamson Ave. to Church Street	Pedestrian Facility	Install sidewalk	\$440,00 0
Elon College & Gibsonville	Westbrook Ave. US 70 – McLean Dr.	Municipal bike lane/ sidewalk	Widen facility to include bike lane- install sidewalk	\$700,00 0

Prior to development of the 1994 Plan, the only bicycle planning activities in the area were the Alamance County County-Wide Bicycle Routes established by the NCDOT Bicycle Program. By preparing the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan the above listed projects are eligible for funding under the urban area's Transportation Improvement Program.

Computerized Traffic Signal System

The 1997 Goals and Objectives Survey conducted as a precursor to the Transportation Plan Update identified improved traffic signal timing and coordination as a top priority. The last several TIP's have included a "Computerized Signal System"; the project is underway. When completed, the system will coordinate the timing of 152 intersections in the City of Burlington, Graham and Alamance County. In addition to equipment such as controllers, cabinets and detectors, microcomputers and peripheral devices and a fiber optics network, the system will also employ closed circuit TV fed to four monitoring centers as follows: City of Graham Administration Building, City of Burlington Public Works Building, Graham office of NCDOT, and Main Operations Center at the Signal Maintenance Shop in the City of Burlington.

Summary of Revenue Sources and Needs As Identified in the Transportation Plan Update

An enlightening part of the 1999 Transportation Plan Update is its coverage of financial considerations. The plan provides an overview of Federal, State and local funding sources and compares these funding capabilities with the total cost of transportation improvements needed. The plan anticipates revenues totaling approximately \$342 million for road construction and maintenance over the 25-Year planning horizon. This figure compares with cost estimates of \$472 million needed for capital road projects and road maintenance over the same 25-year period, leaving a funding deficit of \$130 million. The plan notes that much of this deficit could be made up by developer contributions for the reservation of land or construction of road projects for which development creates demand.

Amtrak Rail Passenger Service (Existing)

Amtrak operates two passenger trains with stops in Burlington. The *Piedmont* makes a daily round trip between Raleigh and Charlotte. The *Carolinian* makes one daily round trip between Charlotte and New York. The State of North Carolina owns the equipment for the *Piedmont* and contracts with Amtrak for maintenance and operation of the train. The *Carolinian* uses Amtrak equipment and is Amtrak maintained.

High Speed Rail Service (Proposed)

In 1997, the Piedmont High Speed Corridor Rail Study concluded that the potential for ridership and revenue along an improved rail corridor running from Washington, DC through Richmond, Virginia to Charlotte, North Carolina would be greater than any other illustrative high-speed route in the United States. Since that time, the route has been extended as far as Atlanta and Macon, Georgia. Transportation officials in North Carolina and several other southern states recently agreed on the best route for the high-speed rail corridor. The proposed route would include eight stops in North Carolina: Raleigh, Burlington, Greensboro, High Point, Winston Salem (by connector), Lexington, Salisbury and Charlotte. Trains would travel at speeds of up to 90 mph along some sections and 110 mph in others. Thus, while Amtrak currently provides service between Charlotte and Washington, the trip takes 8 to 10 hours as opposed to the 6 hours anticipated with the high-speed service.

Estimates are that it will take at least \$2.6 billion in federal dollars to build/improve the line. If the US Department of Transportation and Congress fund the project quickly, the service could be in place by 2010. The first infrastructure improvements to enhance travel times along the route would include signal upgrades, crossing improvements and straightening some curves. Tilt trains might also be employed to compensate for sections of track where curve radii are less than optimal.

Other Future Rail Service (Proposed)

While the possibility of high-speed rail service has garnered most of the attention in recent years, other rail service options involving Burlington have also been under study. Specifically, the Piedmont Triad Regional Mobility/Passenger Rail Investment Study was undertaken to explore the feasibility of (1) a passenger rail proposal providing services between Asheville and Raleigh through Burlington generally following the I-40 corridor, and (2) a passenger rail proposal providing for commuter rail services between Winston-Salem, Greensboro High Point, Burlington and outlying communities.

In January 1999, the NCDOT Rail Division completed a study that evaluated potential commuter rail service corridors throughout the state. One such corridor was between Burlington and Greensboro. Travel time by car along I-40/I-85 is about 25 minutes, compared to the estimated 32 minutes by train. The report estimated that the route could potentially serve up to 43,000 commuters.

Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART)⁹

The Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) is a regional transportation partnership formed by legislative action. PART is comprised of four MPO's in the Piedmont region including Alamance County and all other local governments in a 13-county region. The purpose of this partnership is to identify and implement alternative transportation modes within the region, while also minimizing future increases in traffic congestion and air pollution. Among the foremost issues being discussed are opportunities for the integration of bus, van and rail transit services to and within the region.

Of particular note, PART recently assumed responsibility for the coordination of ridesharing and vanpooling services which had previously been administered by Regional Ridesharing Services and Vanpooling of the Piedmont (RSVP), a separate department of the Winston-Salem Transit Authority. PART is currently in the midst of transferring these functions, with fixed route services expected to be up and running by the fall of 2002.

Alamance County Transportation Systems (ACTS)¹⁰

General Information

⁹ Information for this section came from a telephone interview with Stephanie Sowell, PART, 4/19/02, 800-588-7787 or 336-727-2003.

¹⁰ Information for this section came from a telephone interview with Greg Faust, Interim Director of ACTS, Inc. 4/24/02, (336) 222-0565.

Alamance County Transportation Systems, Inc. (ACTS) is a private, non-profit corporation providing transportation primarily to clients of public and private non-profit human service agencies in Alamance County. Typical riders include the physically and mentally handicapped, elderly, and low-income persons. While ACTS is oriented mostly toward clients of human services organizations, ACTS transit services are also available to the general public upon request. Much of the funding for ACTS comes from the Community Transportation Program Grant, which is administered by the Public Transportation Division of NCDOT. Unlike some other transit systems, ACTS does not contract out the day to day management, operation and scheduling of its van services. ACTS has 34 employees, of which 30 are drivers. Vehicle maintenance of the 30-van fleet is contracted out, however. In 2001, ACTS vans provided for 123,000 transit trips and logged in 2.8 million miles.

Subscription Service by Human Service Agencies

ACTS provides van transportation services for clients of some 40 different human service agencies in the Alamance County area. Service is provided weekdays from about 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. In addition, a nighttime service, generally geared toward the needs of WorkFirst clients, runs from 9:00pm to 1:00 am, also Monday through Friday. Subscription service “fares” paid by participating agencies are set at \$1.75 per mile.

Regular Services to the General Public

A one-way fare for a “demand response trip” for the general public is \$5 within the county and \$10 for a trip outside the county, including twice daily runs to Chapel Hill, Duke and the VA Hospital. Such trips require scheduling the day before the pick up so as to allow for coordination of trips, routes and riders.

NET Service

In addition to pre-arranged services to the general public as described above, ACTS also provides for “same day” service for area residents who, for example, require transportation to a doctor’s appointment. This service was started to relieve rescue services and ambulance companies from tying up emergency vehicles to transport patients for routine doctors visits. Fares for NET Service are \$20 each way.

Rural General Public

Rural General Public is a State-funded transit program intended to serve residents of “rural” areas. Under the program, Alamance County residents living anywhere outside the City of Burlington are eligible for the service. ACTS, Inc. receives block grant funding from the NC DOT for this rural transit service. To be eligible for funding, transit routes must go from *rural to rural or rural to urban (as well as back to rural)*. The fare for a one-way trip is \$5. To be eligible for on-going grant assistance, ACTS must also demonstrate that it is providing no less than 10% of its service trips free of charge to those who cannot afford to pay.

ACTS is to Become a Transit Authority

Currently, plans are underway which will convert ACTS, Inc. from a private, non-profit *company* to a publicly owned transportation *authority*. As such, ACTS (which will operate under a new name) will become an agency of Alamance County, with all of the advantages and benefits available to a local government entity. Anticipated benefits, for example, will include the ability to buy equipment and supplies under state contract, access to vehicle insurance pools, eligibility for employees to have state health care and retirement benefits, etc.

The Future of Transit Services in Alamance County

Neither the County nor the City of Burlington nor any other municipality in the county provides a fixed route public transit system to area residents. While the City of Burlington is eligible for federal and state operating assistance for peak-hour bus service, it has not yet elected to take on that responsibility. With

the transition of ACTS from a non-profit transit company to a publicly owned transportation authority, the possibility also exists that ACTS could manage fixed route transit services in the area.

In the past, the projected start-up costs and operating expenses of a fixed route transit service apparently have been major stumbling blocks to political support-- even with initial capital and operating grant funds available. Even so, attendees at several community forums for this Strategic Plan have continued to express interest and support for a public transportation service. Local officials have also begun discussing the possibility of establishing fixed route transit services in Alamance County. As the area continues to grow and streets become more congested, the attractiveness of public transit will likely grow as a transportation option. This plan recommends that these discussions concerning public transit continue in earnest, with the hope that such services become a reality within the next few years. To help prepare for this eventuality, local area planning officials and developers should begin to implement "transit sensitive development", meaning development patterns that revolve around focal points that could become future transit stations. (See Section 3: **Housing and Neighborhood Development** for more on this).

Taxi Services

Burlington-based Golden Eagle Taxi Company is the sole provider of taxi services within the planning area of the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization. While the company will provide service to locations as far west as Winston-Salem and as far east as Raleigh, the bulk of the company's service requests are in the greater Burlington area. Fares, which have not changed in at least the past three years, include a \$1.60 entry fee plus \$1.80 per mile thereafter.

The company has eleven cabs, or an increase of just one from the ten it had in 1999. Of note, the company also operates a handicapped accessible van.

(Telephone interview with Golden Eagle Taxi Company Dispatcher, 4/19/02 336-227-0550)

Burlington Alamance Regional Airport (BARA)

Burlington Alamance Regional Airport is one of the highest volume general aviation airports in the state. Located just east of NC 62 and south of I-40/85, BARA is home to some 90 aircraft, up from 55 or 60 just three or four years ago. General aviation services include airplane maintenance, refueling, flight training, and airplane rental. Corporate clients routinely using BARA include LabCorp, whose planes account for 50% of all traffic at the facility. Current plans call for extending the present 5000-foot runway to 6000 feet in 2002 and eventually to 6500 feet. Airport revenue is generated by renting space and by fuel surcharges. Revenues for the airport are expected to grow after the runway is extended and business jet service increases.

Access to the airport will soon be improved as highway projects listed in the Burlington-Graham Thoroughfare Plan are implemented. Particularly, the extension of St. Marks Church Road, with a new interchange at I-40/85, continuing south and east to connect with Grand Oaks Boulevard, will dump new traffic at the intersection of Grand Oaks and NC 62, north of the entrance to the airport. Eventually, Grand Oaks Boulevard will continue on to the east, passing north of the airport as Alamance Parkway.

The Issue of Unpaved Private Roads

Please see policy Section 3 on **Housing and Neighborhood Development** for a detailed discussion of this issue.

Access Management to Major Roadways: Consolidation of Driveways and Connection of Adjoining Parking Lots

From a policy standpoint, the number of driveways along the County's major roads has a direct impact on the ability of the roadway to move traffic. Each turning movement (and there can be *hundreds per*

business during the course of the day) associated with an individual driveway slows traffic and creates the potential for a traffic accident.

One way to reduce this problem is to consolidate driveways as, for example, when three driveways can be reduced to two. This can be as simple as a single business replacing the existing apron of an extra driveway with a vertical curb. In other instances, it may call for two businesses coming together to share a common driveway along their property line.

A second, even more effective way to reduce unsafe turning movements onto major roads is to encourage adjoining businesses to connect their parking lots. This allows the motorist/shopper to visit more than one business on the same side of the road without turning back onto the highway for short distances.

In short, uncoordinated road access and unconnected parking lots hamper the traffic moving capabilities of the county's roads. New County standards requiring shared driveways and connected parking areas could do much to alleviate these problems.

Reducing the Traffic Load on Major Roadways: Connecting the Streets of Adjoining Neighborhoods and Subdivisions

Each new neighborhood or subdivision should not be viewed as an isolated island unto itself, but rather as another element of an intricate network of streets and roads. The streets, bikeways, and sidewalks of one neighborhood should be connected with those of adjacent neighborhoods. This allows children, for example, to walk and bike to school, or to a friend's house, or to other activities, etc. without having to use a major roadway. Adults too, should be able to walk or bike to other neighborhoods, or even to work, by passing through quiet residential streets.

By developing a fully connected *honeycomb* of local streets, a child or adult should be able to travel anywhere within a one-half to one square mile neighborhood planning area without having to cross or use a major roadway. At the same time, the pattern of the street layout, pavement width, intersections, etc. can be carefully designed to discourage cut-through automobile traffic.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Policy 6.1: Transportation planning shall be employed to promote a hierarchical, functional transportation system and to promote the proper arrangement of land patterns by controlling the location of streets, highways, trails, and other modes of transportation.

Policy 6.2: A program of improvements and maintenance to maximize the use of existing roadways shall be employed as a cost effective and environmentally sound means of meeting area transportation needs.

Policy 6.3: Alamance County shall participate in regional transportation and lobbying efforts. The County supports initiatives that would increase the area of the county included in transportation planning.

Policy 6.4: The development of bikeways, sidewalks, trails, and other means of transportation shall be encouraged. Particular attention should be given to the priority bicycle and pedestrian needs as submitted for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program.

Policy 6.5: The County shall support initiatives to expand public transportation services and shall encourage private taxi, bus and van services as alternatives to the private automobile. The special transportation needs of the elderly and disabled shall be recognized. To make such services economical, the County shall encourage compact and transit sensitive land development patterns.

Policy 6.6: So as to minimize (1) unnecessary turning movements on to and off of major roads, and (2) the use of major roadways for purely local trips, the County shall encourage street connections between adjoining residential neighborhoods, as well as connections between parking lots of adjoining commercial developments.

Policy 6.7: Access to higher intensity development shall generally not be permitted through an area of lower intensity development. For example, access to a multi-family development, major park facility or other large traffic generator shall not be permitted through a single-family residential neighborhood.

Policy 6.8: Access to the County's major roadways shall be managed so as to preserve the intended purpose of the highway and to protect the investment of taxpayer dollars used to build the facility. Methods may include, for example, limited driveway access, minimum lot frontages, the use of service roads and parallel access roads, etc.

Policy Section 7: Water and Sewer Services

Water and Sewer Services and Their Influence on Growth

Centralized water and sewer services are a major determinant in the location, density, and timing of new development. During the 1950's, 60's, and 70's, federal and state governments heavily subsidized the extension of water and sewer services into both suburban and rural areas. Viewed from the local government perspective, this "cheap" funding source (nearly 90% of the cost came from non-local grants in most cases) made the extension of water and sewer services an attractive capital investment. The provision of such services helped encourage the widespread suburbanization of the United States during this period.

Over the past two decades, however, local governments have witnessed declines in the amount of funding available from state and federal sources for programs and facilities of all kinds, including water and sewer facilities. Local governments are finding it necessary to carefully plan for public water and sewer services and to provide them only where such needs can be fully justified. At the same time, water and sewer service extensions are being viewed increasingly as an effective growth management tool. In fact, the "big three" of infrastructure improvements- *water, sewer and roads*- are generally viewed as far more powerful determinants of growth than local government control over zoning and subdivision standards.

Overview of Water and Sewer Services in Alamance County

At present, water and sewer services in Alamance County are provided primarily by three municipalities. The cities of Burlington, Graham and Mebane provide both water and sewer utilities within their respective service areas. The City of Burlington also provides water to several other smaller municipalities in the county. All three cities will provide water and sewer services to properties outside their corporate boundaries on a limited basis, but only under specified conditions, such as an agreement for annexation of the property or by charging double rates. The water and sewer systems of these municipalities will now be described in some detail.

City of Burlington

Water Supply System

The City of Burlington is, by far, the largest provider of water services in Alamance County. In addition to providing potable water to residents and businesses within the Burlington city limits, the City also sells water in bulk to several other municipalities in Alamance County. Details follow.

The City of Burlington owns and operates two water treatment plants. The **J.D. Mackintosh, Jr. Water Treatment Plant** is located on Harris Road off Huffman Mill Road. Originally built in 1981 as a 9 million gallon per day (mgd) facility, the plant employed a small cofferdam across Big Alamance Creek to create a raw water source. In 1993, with the completion of the Lake Mackintosh Dam and Reservoir, the plant was expanded to 18 mgd. Lake Mackintosh covers about 1200 acres and holds an estimated 7.5 billion gallons of water.

The **Ed Thomas Water Treatment Plant**, located on Ruffin Street in downtown Burlington, began operations in 1950, replacing a smaller facility at the same site. Since that time, the plant has been expanded to its present capacity of 16 mgd. Raw water for the Ed Thomas plant comes from Stoney Creek Reservoir, which holds about 400 million gallons, and is supplemented by an upstream reservoir, Lake Cammack, which holds an estimated 3.2 billion gallons of water. Extensive renovations to the Ed Thomas plant were completed in 2001. Since the Mackintosh plant came on line, the Ed Thomas plant has served in a supplementary capacity, operating intermittently or during peak summer months.

Finished water for the Burlington system is stored at four locations:

- 5.4 mg Clear Water Reservoir-Ruffin Street—Ed Thomas WTP
- 5.0 mg Clear Water Reservoir-Mackintosh WTP
- 1.5 mg elevated storage tank—North Park Avenue
- 1.5 mg elevated storage tank—Race Street

Finished water consumption over the past five years reflects a reversal of long-term trends toward greater water consumption. This is probably a result of several area plant closings, particularly in the textile industry, over the past few years

Year	Average Day	Maximum Day
2001	11.3	16.5
2000	11.3	15.7
1999	12.1	19.0
1998	12.1	17.4

Year	Average Day	Maximum Day
2000	11.3	15.7
1995	11.5	21.6
1990	10.5	14.8
1985	9.4	13.4
1980	9.1	13.0

Thus, between the two water treatment plants, the City has a total water production capacity of over 30 mgd with an average consumption of between 11 and 12 mgd or somewhat more than one-third of production capacity.

Sewage Treatment

As with water supply, the City of Burlington serves the largest area and number of customers in Alamance County. In addition to providing sewer services to residents and businesses within the Burlington city limits, the City's two treatment plants also treat sewage piped in from several other communities in Alamance County.

The **East Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant** is located on Quarry Road off Highway 70 near the Town of Haw River. Originally built in 1961 as a 6 mgd facility, the plant employed trickling filter technology. That plant was replaced in 1980 by a 12 mgd activated sludge-activated carbon type facility. Treated effluent is discharged into the Haw River. In 2000, the last year for which information was reported, there were eleven industries discharging to sewers leading to the East Burlington Plant that were considered significant industrial users (SIU). These industries are required to adhere to the City's

wastewater pretreatment program. Wastewater volumes treated by the plant over the past six years were as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>wastewater flow</u>
2001	5.6 mgd
2000	6.5 mgd
1999	6.7 mgd
1998	7.0 mgd
1997	7.8 mgd
1996	7.8 mgd

The **South Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant** is located on Boywood Road near the community of Swepsonville, about three miles south of Interstate 40/85. Originally built in 1964 as a 6 mgd facility, the plant employed wet-air oxygen technology. The plant was expanded in 1983 to a capacity of 9 mgd. In 1993, the old wet-air treatment technology was replaced by an activated sludge system, allowing the plant to treat up to 12 mgd. Treated effluent is discharged into Alamance Creek, a tributary of the Haw River. In 2000, the last year for which information was reported, there were seventeen industries discharging to sewers leading to the South Burlington Plant that were considered significant industrial users (SIU). These industries are required to adhere to the City's wastewater pretreatment program. Wastewater volumes treated by the plant over the past six years were as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>wastewater flow</u>
2001	7.5 mgd
2000	7.7 mgd
1999	7.6 mgd
1998	8.3 mgd
1997	7.7 mgd
1996	8.1 mgd

Thus, between the two sewage treatment plants, the City has a total wastewater treatment capacity of 24 mgd with average treatment volumes of between 13 and 15 mgd. This represents about 55-60% of total, combined capacity.

City of Graham and Mebane

Water Supply

The cities of **Graham and Mebane** jointly own a water treatment plant on Highway 70 between the two communities. By agreement, Graham owns two thirds of the facility and Mebane owns one third. Operation of the plant is handled entirely by the City of Graham, however. The raw water source for the plant is Quaker Lake. The plant was originally designed to produce up to 6 mgd of finished water. An upgrade to the plant is currently underway which will double the production capacity of the plant to 12 mgd by the end of 2002. As of that date, Graham will have 8 mgd of finished water available and Mebane will have 4 mgd.

Consumption of finished water is reported to be less than half of the total production capacity. In addition to meeting the potable water needs of their own residents, the Graham/Mebane water treatment plant also provides water to the community of Green Level.

Sewage Treatment

The **City of Graham** operates its own wastewater treatment plant on East Gilbraith Street. While the plant is permitted to receive up to 3.5 mgd, a \$9 million renovation was recently completed which would allow the plant to expand its treatment capacity to 5 mgd if needed. Wastewater flows to the plant typically average 1.75 to 2.0 mgd or about one half of the plant's capacity. Of note, some areas on the southwest side of Graham also send their sewage to Burlington for treatment.

The **City of Mebane** operates its own wastewater treatment plant at the end of Corridor Street. Mebane's plant is approved to treat up to 2.5 mgd, but averages roughly one half of its operating capacity. Plans are underway to expand the plant's capacity.

Elon, Gibsonville, Green Level, Haw River, Swepsonville and the Village of Alamance

Water Supply

The communities of **Elon, Gibsonville, Haw River** and the **Village of Alamance** buy water in bulk from the **City of Burlington**. These municipalities, in turn, resell water to customers within their respective jurisdictions. **Green Level** buys its water from the **City of Graham**. Swepsonville buys its water from the **Orange/Alamance Water Authority**.

Sewage Treatment

The communities of **Elon, Gibsonville, Haw River**¹¹, **Swepsonville** and the **Village of Alamance** pipe their sewage to the **City of Burlington**, where it is treated at one of the City's two wastewater treatment plants. **Green Level** sends its sewage into the **Haw River** collection system, where it is then piped on to the **City of Burlington** for treatment.

Ossippee Sanitary District

The **Ossippee Sanitary District** provides water and sewer services to a small portion of the unincorporated County out Route 87 in the vicinity of Western High School. Potable water is from a series of community wells. Wastewater treatment is provided through a package treatment plant. Reportedly, the Sanitary District is seeking to incorporate.

Summary of Area Water and Sewer System Capacities and Use Volumes

Burlington's water supply system is operating at only about one third of its capacity; the City's wastewater treatment system is operating at somewhat more than half of its available capacity. Similarly, the joint **Graham/Mebane** water plant is operating at less than half of its total production capacity. Graham's wastewater treatment plant is operating at 50-60% of capacity, while Mebane's is closer to 50%.

On both accounts, system demands have declined in the past few years as several area manufacturers have closed their doors. In this regard, the City is especially interested in recruiting new industry to the community—to restore the tax base, provide jobs, and spread utility system operating costs over a broader customer base. In addition, the City finds itself in an especially strong position regarding water supplies, just as neighboring communities in the Triad to the west and the Research Triangle to the east continue to struggle with water supply shortfalls. Agreements have been reached to allow the **City of Greensboro** to purchase water from the **City of Burlington's**, as a means of alleviating that city's on-going effort to assure a long term supply of water from multiple sources.

Expansions of Present Water and Wastewater Service Areas

The **City of Burlington's** policy concerning extensions of water and sewer is based primarily upon the location of the proposed development or service area relative to the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). If the development is located inside the ETJ, (and therefore subject to the City's zoning authority) and is willing to be annexed, the City will generally extend water and sewer service. Of course, the cost of extending the utility lines must make good economic sense relative to the number of rate paying customers being added to the system.

The **City of Graham's** utility extension policy requires that the proposed addition to the service area must adjoin the City limits and be willing to be annexed. Otherwise, it is up to the City Council to decide

¹¹ Some limited areas of Haw River send their sewage to Graham for treatment.

whether it wishes to annex the area as a satellite. Similar water and sewer extension policies are in place for the **City of Mebane**.

Prospects for Regionalization of Water and Sewer Services in Alamance County

As the urbanized areas of Alamance County have grown closer together, the boundaries between communities have become less clear. A logical consequence of such regional growth is the prospect of regionalization of water and sewer utilities. At present, there are only three water treatment plants and four sewage treatment plants of substantial size serving the urbanizing areas of Alamance County. All seven treatment plants are owned by just three municipalities; the **City of Burlington** owns four and the **Cities of Graham** and **Mebane** own one and one half each. The towns of **Elon, Gibsonville, Green Level, Haw River, Swepsonville**, and the **Village of Alamance** are all dependent upon the other three for their water and sewer services-- to one extent or another.

Given the degree to which municipal water distribution and sewage collection systems in the county are already linked, it may be advisable to look more carefully at the benefits of fully regionalizing all water and sewer systems. For example, one motivating factor for creating a regional utility is to spread capital improvement and operating costs over the broadest possible customer base; there may be concern that the costs of maintaining and improving several separate treatment systems will become cost prohibitive in the near future. A second motivating factor may be the ability of a larger regional utility to meet ever tightening environmental permitting and performance standards. A third motivating factor may be the opportunity to equalize utility rates across the county, thereby placing all areas on an equal footing with regard to utility costs for prospective commercial and residential customers.

Thus, by spreading capital improvement costs, environmental permitting, and operation and maintenance costs over the broadest possible customer base, it is likely that future rate hikes for water and sewer services would be lower. Conversely, it is probable that rate hikes would be greater if multiple treatment plants have to be continually upgraded under ever more restrictive environmental rules, while being supported by a comparatively smaller customer base.

Why the Term “County-Wide Water and Sewer” Is A Misnomer

Interestingly, quite a few citizens offering input to the Strategic Plan used the term “county-wide water and sewer” when describing the infrastructure needs of Alamance County. The term “county-wide water and sewer” is misleading in its suggestion that centralized water and sewer service can somehow be provided to the entire county. Utility systems, particularly those involving sewer lines, are generally just too expensive to be justified outside of urbanizing areas. Most of Alamance County is neither urbanized nor urbanizing at a level of density sufficient to justify the provision of centralized water, much less sewer services. Rather than using the term “county-wide water and sewer”, better terminology might include “utility development corridors” or “sewage treatment service areas”.

Growth Policies and Centralized Water and Sewer Services

Generally, Alamance County supports the intent of the water and sewer extension policies of the cities of Burlington, Graham and Mebane to encourage efficient, cost effective patterns of growth in or near existing urban areas. At the same time, the County shares the perspective that large areas of productive agricultural land and important, environmentally sensitive areas should be preserved. To do this, these areas should generally not be provided with water and sewer service so as not to encourage their development. Rather, water and sewer services should be employed strategically to encourage growth in those parts of the County most suited to development, and where urban services can be provided most economically.

Exceptions to Sewer Extensions for Important Economic Development Initiatives

In the event that an important economic development opportunity (i.e. desirable industry providing higher paying jobs) should arise in a remote location, the County believes that an exception may be in order allowing water and sewer services to be extended on a case-by-case basis to such industry. Of course this will require careful coordination and dialogue with the municipality that controls the involved utilities. (See Section 14 on Economic Development for a review of policies that could be employed to justify the extension of water and sewer service to a remote location.)

Package Sewage Treatment Plants

Package treatment plants are normally small, independently owned sewage treatment systems. They typically serve a single project or planned unit development. Package plants have been frowned upon for many years by the State of North Carolina, largely due to the challenges involved in their proper operation and maintenance. For many years now, the State has been pressing for package treatment plants to be abandoned and their systems tied into a municipal system.

However, there are now new package plant treatment technologies and recommended operational organizations being developed that offer hope in the use of package sewage treatment plants. Such package plants have the potential to fill the technological void between the individual septic/nitrification field and the distant, very expensive centralized sewage treatment plant. In sensitive environmental areas, as well as rural areas remote from centralized public sewer, package sewage treatment plants may offer the best hope of allowing for greenspace residential development (See Section 3 on Housing and Neighborhood Policies for a discussion of *greenspace development*).

On balance, Alamance County has elected to adopt a policy to permit the use of package treatment plants, but only in the absence of centralized public sewers. Further, when such package plants are designed, they should be constructed so as to allow for later abandonment and connection of system collection lines to a centralized system.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE POLICIES

Policy 7.1: Alamance County endorses utilities extension policies (1) which focus water and sewer services within existing municipalities, villages, communities and in nearby targeted growth areas, (2) where development densities would make the provision of all public services more efficient, (3) where the land is particularly well suited for development and (4) which steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas, such as floodplains or water supply watersheds.

Policy 7.2: Alamance County endorses utilities extension policies that avoid those parts of the county best suited for agriculture and to protect farmland from development pressures brought about by such utilities. Exceptions to this policy may include extensions for major economic development initiatives, and extensions to address imminent public health problems or related environmental hazards.

Policy 7.3: Alamance County may assist in the expense of extending water and sewer services when such assistance (1) will result in the development of desirable new or expanded industry and the creation of permanent jobs in numbers commensurate with the expenditure required, (2) will result in a positive payback to the county's taxpayers, in terms of the taxes generated by the new development versus the costs incurred, and (3) would not otherwise be provided, potentially playing a critical role in a location decision by the prospective industry.

Policy 7.4: Alamance County shall support the efforts of public and private service providers to regionalize water and sewer services. The benefits of such regionalization may include (1) lower capital investment and operating costs per capita, (2) improved ability to meet stricter

environmental performance standards, and (3) rate structures which seek to balance and equalize customer charges throughout the service area.

Policy 7.5: Greenspace development away from centralized sewage treatment facilities may employ package sewage treatment plants or other alternative sewage treatment systems as a means of achieving more efficient land use. Such systems shall be (1) designed for assimilation into centralized systems and (2) have a permanent organizational ownership so as to guarantee their proper operation and management for the life of the system.

Policy Section 8: School Facilities

Background

The Alamance-Burlington School System is a comprehensive school district serving the entire county including the municipalities of Burlington, Graham, Elon, Haw River, Green Level, and Mebane. The system was formed in 1996 with the merger of the former Burlington City and Alamance County School Systems. At the time of merger, both school systems were relatively well-established in their respective communities. The City system had approximately 6,400 students and the County system approximately 11,000. Burlington City schools were under-enrolled, while the county schools were booming.

Support for the merger of the systems certainly was somewhat mixed. However, the business and political leadership in the county led the effort to achieve merger. With the support of the Alamance-Burlington Chamber of Commerce, both Boards of Education, and the Alamance County Board of Commissioners adopted a plan of merger in 1994.

General Statistics Concerning Numbers of Students, Schools and Teachers

As of March, 2002, the Alamance-Burlington School System had an enrollment of 20,946 students, making it the 16th largest system in the state. The table below shows the breakdown of these students by grade levels, gender and race:

Elementary School Enrollment (3/25/02)	9,787 (5,014 males, 4,773 females)
Middle School Enrollment (3/25/02)	5,336 (2,722 males, 2,614 females)
High School Enrollment (3/25/02)	5,758 (2,877 males, 2,879 females)
Alternative School Enrollment (3/25/02)	67 (41 males, 26 females)
Total Student Enrollment (3/25/02)	20,946 (10,654 males, 10,292 females)
Minority Student Population (3/25/02)	8,033 (4,062 males, 3,971 females)

There are 33 schools in the system—6 high schools, 7 middle schools, 19 elementary schools and 1 alternative school.

The school system has over 2,600 full-time and part-time employees, making it the second largest employer in the county. Of these employees, 1,476 are regular classroom teachers. (i.e. this number does not include media specialists, counselors, psychologists, etc.)

Population Growth and Demand for New Schools

From 1990 to 2000, Alamance County added over 22,000 more residents. For 2000 to 2010 another 22,000 are expected. (See Growth Factors Analysis.) While Alamance County continues to attract a significant number of retirees, there also has been a steady increase in the number of families with children. This type of rapid growth, particularly involving school aged children, will continue to place a severe strain on capacity of the County's public schools. As a result, some predictions call for an

estimated 5000 new students in the county in the next ten years. In rough terms, these numbers could create a need for up to ten new schools.

In response to these concerns, the Board of Commissioners of Alamance County and the Alamance County School Board appointed the *Joint School Facilities Oversight Committee* to study and determine current and future school facility needs. In addition to the joint appointees, the Committee has full access to key staff members within both County government and the County school administration. The Committee and supporting staff has been charged with fully examining current facility needs within the existing school system, as well as the number, size, location and characteristics of new schools that will be needed over the coming decade. In light of the responsibility given to the Committee, and the expertise available to the group to carry out its duties, this Strategic Plan will defer to the Oversight Committee as to matters related to their charge. Nonetheless, this plan will weigh in on one issue that bears directly on the future development of the County as a whole: Schools and their influence on growth.

Schools and Their Influence on Growth

When speaking of infrastructure that influences growth, most people think about roads and utilities like water and sewer lines. Yet schools have been shown to be just as important in influencing growth as pipes in the ground or pavement on the street. Schools, therefore, are now and will continue to be an important consideration in planning for infrastructure and growth patterns of Alamance County.

Recent research has shown that the trend toward building new schools on large sites far removed from existing urban centers, called “school sprawl” or “school giantism” can have far-reaching impacts on school children, school districts and the larger community. Following are two excerpts from a paper written by Sam Passmore of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation that explains this view¹²:

“Educators and parents express concern that large schools reduce educational outcomes, particularly for at-risk youth. Schools that are more distant can diminish student participation in extra-curricular activities, parental involvement and taxpayer support. Students are walking and cycling to school less, which contributes to alarming rates of childhood obesity. Many suggest that the growing physical disconnect between schools and community helps create a level of student anonymity and social alienation that sets the stage for tragic events like Columbine.

Smart growth groups, which traditionally have not weighed in on educational matters, are now questioning the same trend. Rather than build shopping mall schools at the edge of town, smart growth advocates encourage the continued use of existing schools and the construction of new schools on infill sites within existing neighborhoods.

Smart growth advocates' interest in neighborhood schools dovetails with education reformers' interest in small schools, presenting an important opportunity for collaboration. Scattered efforts are underway across the country addressing the shared interests of educators and smart growth advocates. Much remains to be done, and funders and leaders from all sectors have an important role to play.” (from the abstract)

“... a new school on a distant site can act as a growth magnet, helping draw people out of older urban neighborhoods and into new subdivisions on the metropolitan fringe. It is well understood that school quality determines where many families will choose to locate within a region. If new schools are being built on the edge of town and they are perceived to be superior, as new schools often are, then families who can afford the move will often relocate. Similarly, under performing schools in older neighborhoods can push families to leave. Even families without school age children are impacted as school quality has a significant influence on residential property values. Thus, school quality can influence population shifts within a region from the urban core to the periphery, precisely the pattern of urban disinvestment and suburban expansion that troubles smart growth advocates most.” (page 3)

¹² “Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities”, Sam Passmore, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, published by the Funders’ Network For Smart Growth and Livable Communities.

Thus, in much the same way that a new sewer line can have a major influence on the location of growth in the county, so too can actions taken by the School Board concerning the location of new schools play a major part in the decisions of developers and homebuyers as to where to place their homes. New schools can once again be the cornerstone of a healthy, close-knit neighborhood or they can simply be another engine of sprawl. This plan recommends that decisions about new school location and design take into consideration this broader perspective of schools as instruments for building better communities, rather than simply as isolated educational processing plants for children.

School System Finances

The School Administration recently put together a report in presentation format entitled Alamance-Burlington School System: Show Me the Money. While the intended audience for the presentation was the County School Board, the information contained in the report is useful for a broader audience. It contains several insights about the funding of Alamance County Schools, a few of which are summarized below:

- Of 9,333 persons surveyed in 2001, 65% of parents and 60% of staff thought the school system's budget was less than \$25 million. (The actual 2000-2001 School System budget was \$115.7 million dollars, including funding for both operating expenses as well as capital improvements.)
- 78% of the total school system budget comes from state and federal sources.
- One third of all local monies are used for maintenance and utilities, because the state will not cover these expenses.
- Food services are self supporting and federally underwritten; what the meal price doesn't cover is subsidized by federal dollars.
- The operating budget for student bus transportation is \$2.87 million. Of this amount, 15% or \$430,000 is locally paid; this represents less than 2% of all local monies.
- For 1999-2000, (the most recent year for which statistics were available) local per pupil funding in Alamance County was \$1097 or \$206 less than the State average of \$1304. If local per pupil funding were increased to the State average, there would be an additional \$4 million dollars available to the public schools.
- The 2001-2002 Alamance County tax rate of .4200 per \$100 valuation was among the lowest in the state. A one-cent increase in the tax rate would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home an additional \$10 per year. (This same one-cent increase would generate about \$900,000 per year.)
- During the 2001-2002 school year, per capita income in Alamance County was \$26,678 compared to \$22,579 for the State as a whole. At the same time, total school resources per capita were \$223 compared to \$240 statewide. Thus, the county ranked 16th out of 100 counties in terms of ability to pay but 55th in terms of budget allocations to schools.¹³

How to Pay for Schools

The above discussion of facts concerning funding of the County school system brings school system finances to the forefront. Ultimately, at the center of the school debate in Alamance County, as in many other counties, is the question: "After meeting our operating expenses, how do we pay for new schools and renovations to existing schools?"

There are fundamentally two perspectives on this question. Some would argue, for example, that it is not fair to tax property owners in the more rural areas of southwestern and northern Alamance County for new schools being built to serve the rapid growth areas of central and southeastern Alamance.

¹³ As measured by per capita income, and school budget dollars per capita, respectively.

Others would argue that schools benefit the entire county, regardless of their location and need. The whole issue of paying for schools, as well as other “infrastructure” related to growth, is discussed in Policy Section 11: **Paying for Infrastructure and Services**.

Traffic Access, Management and Circulation at Schools

Committee members expressed concern regarding the adequacy of traffic management and site planning at the County's schools. Today's school campuses are often overwhelmed in their ability to deal with increasing numbers of automobiles. At the high school level, for example, greater numbers of students are driving to school. At the elementary level, greater numbers of parents are chauffeuring their children to school. In addition, it is important that access drives into schools not be located on blind, inside curves. In summary, most older school campuses were not designed to address the vehicular traffic volumes and turning movements found today at these schools. As a result, traffic tie-ups can be routinely lengthy, and motor vehicle accidents are a constant concern.

Co-location and Joint Development of Parks at Public Schools

(See Policy Section 10: **Parks, Recreation and Open Space**.)

Alamance Community College

During the 2001-2002 academic year, Alamance Community College (ACC) had a total curriculum enrollment of about 4000 students. The student body is growing rapidly. At present ACC is the 16th largest of the State's 58 community colleges. By 2003, it is expected to be the 12th or 13th largest. By the year 2020, college officials project a total curriculum enrollment of between 6500 and 6800, or an increase of 60 to 70%. To serve this expanded student body, the following assumptions have been put forth regarding physical changes in the college over the next 20 years¹⁴

- In addition to the main campus, two off campus sites will be needed, one in the West Burlington/Elon area, and one in the Mebane area.
- The main campus will likely have four additional buildings by that time: administration, allied health, technology, and literacy. Two of these buildings have already been funded.
- Much of the college's property is located in the floodplain. With more buildings, students and automobiles located on the remaining useable land area, a parking deck will more than likely be required.
- The existing road in front of the college will need to be four-laned and signalized to address growing traffic management issues.
- Some type of public transportation will be needed to bring students to and from campus.
- Many classes will be offered live on cable or satellite, and will probably be interactive.
- Some faculty will be teaching from their homes.
- The college will likely be offering Bachelor's degree programs in conjunction with the State university system.
- The main building will need major renovations by that time, as it will be 45 years old.

¹⁴ The assumptions set forth in this section were presented by Martin H. Nadelman, President of Alamance Community College. They were presented in an interview with area educational leaders held at the County Planning Office on February 27, 2002. Mr. Nadelman indicated that, to assist in the formulation of these assumptions, the College had conducted a comparative study of ACC growth and facilities relative to other community colleges in the State system.

ACC annual operating budget for 2002-2003 was \$18 million. Of this total, \$1.9 million was received from the County, most of which was employed for operation and maintenance expenses.

POLICIES FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES

Policy 8.1: The County supports advanced planning for the location of new public schools. Such locations shall serve to reinforce compact growth rather than promoting sprawl in more rural locations. New elementary school locations shall be viewed as a cornerstone of the neighborhoods they are intended to serve.

Policy 8.2: Alamance County encourages offers of land for the siting of new schools, particularly in conjunction with the development of related neighborhood development. Acceptance of such properties shall be based on approved locational and design criteria.

Policy 8.3: Site planning for traffic management and safety in the vicinity of public schools shall be a priority.

Policy 8.4: County funding for public schools shall be based upon objective performance standards measured on an annual basis, and a comparative analysis of local funding support relative to other counties in the state.

Policy 8.5: Alamance County supports the vision of Alamance Community College in meeting the educational and job readiness requirements of area residents.

Policy 8.6: Alamance County shall emphasize the use of public, private and community partnerships to maximize improvements in our public schools. There shall be a special focus on bringing the business community into the process.

Policy 8.7: Alamance County shall place renewed emphasis on the role of public schools in developing a locally grown quality work force.

Policy Section 9: Solid Waste Management

Collection Of Solid Waste

Residential solid waste in Alamance County is collected and hauled by two private companies operating under franchise agreements with the County. Republic Waste Services holds the franchise for two of the three areas. County Garbage Services, a local independent company, holds the franchise for the third area. Under the service agreements, garbage is collected once per week at the curbside. Each residential customer may have up to three, thirty-two gallon containers of their own. The fee for this service is \$14.50 per month as set by the County Commissioners. Alamance County does not franchise or authorize the use of "greenboxes". "Convenience centers" are located at the County landfill and at the Republic Waste Services operations facility. Fees are 50 cents per garbage bag for those who wish to take their own garbage directly to the landfill.

Disposal of Solid Waste

Located on Austin Quarter Road in the Saxapaw area, the Alamance County Landfill site consists of 423 acres, of which 90 acres have been approved for filling. Opened in March 1994, the new landfill replaced the old County facility that closed in October 1993. While the new landfill adjoins the Haw River, the area approved for filling is about 1000 feet from the river's edge. Within the 90 acres, seven "cells" have been authorized for filling. Cell one, now full, consisted of 16 acres, and cost \$4.2 million to design and prepare for filling. Cell two, the active cell, consists of 8.5 acres, and cost \$1.6 million to design and prepare.

Records available for the most recent full year of operation show that the landfill accepted 94,979 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) in 2001. The landfill also accepted 7,324 tons of construction and demolition (C&D) materials that same year. At current compaction specifications of .62 tons per cubic yard, the landfill consumed about 153,000 cubic yards of landfill space in 2001. In 1994, when the new landfill first opened, the projected life expectancy for the facility was 35 years or about five years per cell. More recent (2002) estimates place the life of the landfill at 45 years or through the year 2047. At present, the landfill is open seven days per week: Monday - Friday 7AM to 6PM, Saturday 7AM to 12 noon, and Sunday 1PM to 5PM.

Landfill Equipment

The County currently contracts with a private contractor to operate one 70,000-pound compactor, while also keeping another for back up. Compaction and deposition of materials occurs 5.5 days per week, processing an average of 332 tons of MSW and 21 tons of C&D materials per day in 2001. Industry norms consider one compactor sufficient to process up to about 500 tons per day. Thus, if Alamance County were to approach 500 or more tons per day, it would be necessary to bring another compactor into service.

Recycling

In addition to regular curbside pick up of residential waste, Republic Waste Services also offers a curbside recycling service every other week for \$2.75 per month. Fourteen-gallon bins are provided for the recycling service. Alamance County residents also have the option of taking their recyclables directly to recycling centers at the Republic Waste Services facility or the County landfill. The fee for dropping recyclables off is 25 cents per bag. Republic takes recyclable materials to a company called FCR in Greensboro; FCR charges a tipping fee of \$30 per ton for recyclables.

Disposal of Tires and Major Appliances

The County accepts tires and major appliances (white goods) at the landfill free of charge, and is reimbursed for disposal costs by the State. Reimbursement monies come from a special fund maintained by the State and funded by the assessment of a disposal fee at the time that tires and major appliances are purchased. The landfill accepted about 1100 tons of appliances and metals in 2001. These materials were then transferred to DH Griffin where they were recycled.

Disposal of Old Manufactured Homes

Coble Sandrock operates a private construction and demolition landfill in Alamance County, and has been permitted by the State to accept old manufactured homes for demolition and disposal. The manufactured home owner must arrange to have the structure hauled to the site. The company charges \$250 to accept and dispose of a singlewide trailer and \$500 for a doublewide trailer.

Illegal Disposal of Solid Waste

Complaints about the illegal dumping of trash have fallen in recent years but the problem persists. The total number of households bringing their trash to the landfill, plus the total number who subscribe to curbside collection is less than the total number of households in the County. This means that there are a number of households whose method of disposing of their trash is unaccounted for. Illegal disposal of

solid waste is addressed in the Alamance County Solid Waste Ordinance, and covers requirements and penalties pertaining to illegal disposal. The ordinance is administered by the County's Health Department, and is enforced by the Sheriff as necessary. Of note, the County will waive tipping fees at the landfill for property owners who act to clean up dumpsites that were created on their property without their knowledge or permission.

Financing Solid Waste Management

Tipping Fees at the Alamance County Landfill

The County landfill charges the following tipping fees for various types of waste material:

General municipal solid waste	\$33 per ton
Construction and demolition materials	\$30 per ton
Wooden pallets	\$25 per ton
Yard waste	\$19 per ton
Metals	\$33 per ton

Comparison of Tipping Fees in the Region

A recent survey of landfills in the region revealed that Alamance County has the lowest tipping fee for municipal solid waste:

Alamance County	\$33 per ton
Chatham County (transfer)	\$40.35 per ton
Greensboro`	\$36 per ton
High Point	\$36 per ton
Orange County	\$43 per ton
Piedmont (Kernersville)	\$40 per ton
Randolph County	\$38 per ton

Solid Waste Management Funding

Alamance County's solid waste management program is operated as an enterprise fund, meaning that the costs of operating the program are covered entirely by fees generated; there are no subsidies from the general fund of the County. In 2001, the landfill operation received \$3.4 million in tipping fees and had operating costs of \$2.5 million, resulting in an operating surplus of \$900,000. The accumulated solid waste management enterprise fund now stands at about \$10 million. Industry experts recommend that about \$4 per ton of waste accepted be set aside for closure and monitoring of the landfill. Additional surpluses are employed for future development of landfill cells. Thus, of the \$900,000 surplus in 2001, about \$400,000 has been earmarked for eventual landfill closure and monitoring, while the remaining \$500,000 should be available for future development, purchase of more land, purchase of new or additional equipment, etc.

Alamance County Landfill as a Regional Facility?

There has been some discussion as to whether the Alamance County Landfill could become a regional facility, serving producers from outside the county. Currently, the construction and demolition portion of the County landfill accepts waste from Wake County, grandfathered as an existing customer. Otherwise, the Alamance County landfill has not knowingly accepted solid waste from producers or jurisdictions outside the County.

Of interest, the Orange County landfill is projected to close in 2006 and the Greensboro landfill is expected to close in 2008. In addition, several local governments in the Research Triangle are actively exploring ways to address their future solid waste disposal needs. At the same time, the latest estimates for the Alamance County landfill project a life expectancy for the facility through the year 2047. The County landfill presently owns 440 acres. There is an adjoining tract of land with an additional 1100 acres.

With (1) a favorable revenue to operating cost ratio, (2) the ability to increase tipping fees while remaining competitive, (3) a long life expectancy, (4) a healthy fund balance, and (5) the opportunity to acquire even more land, it would appear that Alamance County has the potential to serve as a regional facility-- if a decision were made to do so. The advantage of creating a regional facility would be monetary—allowing the County to fund, for example, new schools, parks, and other infrastructure without increasing taxes. The disadvantages would be both real and imagined—real as related to more truck traffic, imagined as related to those residents who would object to the County accepting “other people’s garbage”.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Policy 9.1: Local area requirements for solid waste collection and disposal shall continue to be anticipated through advanced, cooperative planning between the County, its municipalities and other local government jurisdictions in the region.

Policy 9.2: The County shall continue to pursue a variety of waste reduction strategies, including waste prevention, recycling and reuse.

Policy 9.3: Alamance County encourages residential composting and mulching.

Policy 9.4: Alamance County supports education and activities that reduce litter and illegal dumping, foster clean up of dumpsites, promote recycling and reuse, and encourage participation in programs such as Adopt-A-Highway and the Governors Litter Sweep.

Policy 9.5: Alamance County supports solid waste program financing strategies that equitably assess the costs of waste collection and disposal in accordance with the amount of waste each generator produces.

Policy 9.6: The Alamance County Solid Waste Management Program shall continue to be operated as an enterprise fund. No general property tax revenues shall be directed to the program.

Policy Section 10: Parks and Recreation

Overview of Parks and Recreation Services in Alamance County

There are a number of public and private organizations providing parks and recreation services in Alamance County. Of the nine local governments operating in the county, six have recreation departments. The six are Alamance County and the incorporated communities of Burlington, Gibsonville, Graham, Haw River, and Mebane. This number will soon increase to seven as the Town of Elon is building a park and has budgeted for a part-time parks and recreation position. (Alamance Village and Green Level do not have recreation departments.)

In addition to these recreation departments within local government, other important service providers include the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs and the Positive Youth Center.

City of Burlington

The City of Burlington is, by far, the largest single provider of recreation facilities and programs in Alamance County. Some observers have commented that Burlington has some of the best park facilities and recreation programs in the state and even compares well nationally.

With the expansion of the Burlington City limits into Guilford County, so too, has the City’s park facilities looked westward. Currently, the City is building a park some 12 miles west of Burlington city center, off

Springwood Church Road in eastern Guilford County. A 30-acre site there will involve \$5 million dollars for the development of additional soccer fields.

YMCA

The Burlington YMCA is located on an urban site in downtown Burlington. The “Y” has a \$1.5 million operating budget, an increase of 50 percent in the last four years. The YMCA recently completed a 5-year strategic plan. A principal recommendation of the plan is to relocate and replace the existing YMCA facility to larger site where substantial outdoor recreation facilities can be developed. Despite the excellent central location of the current YMCA facility in the urban area, the site is considered constrained by a lack of surrounding open land. One possibility would be the joint development of a new YMCA in cooperation with Alamance Regional Medical Center.

Alamance County Parks and Recreation Facilities

The Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department owns and operates park facilities at seven locations in the county. These locations include the Recreation and Parks Office in Graham, Cedarock Park in Burlington, Morgan Place Park in Elon, Glen Raven Park in the Glen Raven community, Pleasant Grove Recreation Center in northeast Alamance County, the Eli Whitney Recreation Center on Greensboro-Chapel Hill Road, and the Ray Street Recreation Center in Graham. The Department also uses over 20 community-owned, school-owned and municipal owned facilities and fields around Alamance County to operate its countywide athletic program. The seven county-owned facilities are more fully described in the paragraphs following.

Recreation and Parks Office

The Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department is located at 217 College Street in Graham. The offices of the Director, Assistant Director, Administrative Secretary, Athletic Director, Recreation, Coordinator for Special Events, Recreation Coordinator for Senior Adults and Recreation Coordinator for Special Populations are located here. The building has a ceramics room and two large activity rooms. Outdoor facilities include a youth athletic field and full-size basketball court.

Cedarock Park

Cedarock Park is located 6.5 miles south of I-85 on Highway 49. With 414 acres of land, it is one of the largest county-operated parks in the state. Annual visitation averages over 130,000 per year. Located in the foothills of the Cane Mountain range, the park property has an abundance of cedar trees and rock outcroppings; hence the name “Cedarock”. In addition to Rock Creek, there are 13 tributary streams in the park as well as scenic bluffs, Indian relics, deer and wild turkey, and diverse plant life that includes cactus, cypress trees, and wild daffodils. Recreational facilities at the park include equestrian trails, a mountain bike trail, hiking and nature trails, a fishing pond, camping, two disc golf courses, volleyball and basketball courts, a playground, ropes course, horseshoe pits, picnic shelters and rest rooms. Cedarock Park Center is used for reunions, retreats, weddings and parties. Organized activities at the park include horseshoe tournaments, disc golf tournaments, Easter Egg Hunt, the Junior Fishing Rodeo, mountain bike riding and concerts.

Cedarock Historical Farm

Cedarock Historical Farm, located in the southwest section of Cedarock Park, recreates a farm setting that dates to the early 1900's. The Garrett Home place, post office, smoke house, corncrib, carriage shed, well and bam have been restored and an antique farm equipment building and pole bam have been constructed on the farm. There is also a rock dam and mill site on the property. This working farm has farm animals and demonstration crops to enhance the 1900 farm atmosphere. Group tours of the property are popular with school groups, day cares and scouts. The Preserving Our Heritage Festival is held in August each year at the farm. The festival features demonstrations, displays, exhibits, music, food and a children's area.

Morgan Place Park

Morgan Place Park is located off Williamson Road in Elon College. This 3.81-acre park consists of six basketball courts, a small shelter and playground equipment. The County Recreation and Parks Department, the Morgan Place Community and the Town of Elon work together to monitor the park's use.

Glen Raven Park

Glen Raven Park is located on Lakeview Avenue in the Glen Raven Community. This 3.95-acre community mini-park includes multiple basketball courts, a tot lot, and picnic tables.

Pleasant Grove Recreation Center

Pleasant Grove Recreation Center is located in the northeast section of Alamance County at the intersection of N.C. Highways 49 and 62. The Center is used extensively for organized basketball, as well as indoor soccer and open gym. The Pleasant Grove Parents and Coaches Association uses the center for meetings and activities. Ceramic classes are offered in cooperation with Alamance Community College. Outdoor facilities include two athletic fields for baseball and softball, a walking track, tot lot and sand volleyball court.

Eli Whitney Recreation Center

Eli Whitney Recreation Center is located off N.C. Highway 87 on Greensboro-Chapel Hill Road. A lighted athletic field and two tennis courts owned and operated by the Eli Whitney Community Recreation Department are directly across the road from the Center. Indoor sports at the center include organized basketball, indoor soccer, and open gym. Other activities at the Center include ladies exercise classes, dance classes, quilting classes, and card tournaments. Outdoor facilities at the Center include a walking track, picnic tables, sand volleyball court, playground, one lighted baseball/softball field, and an unlighted practice field.

Ray Street Recreation Center

Ray Street Center is located at 609 Ray Street in Graham. The Center is used for organized youth basketball as well as indoor soccer. Other activities include dog obedience classes, Special Olympics training, NBA 2-Ball, ladies exercises classes, kickboxing classes, etc. The school system uses the Center during the day for their four-year-old kindergarten physical education classes. The Center has a high participation of area residents after school hours and on Saturdays.

Alamance County Parks and Recreation Athletic Programs

Participation in the County's youth athletic program increased from 291 teams in 1990 to 565 in 2000. That same year approximately 5,000 children and 1,400 volunteer coaches participated in over 3,500 games.

Further, it is estimated that, among students in the unincorporated area of the County, one out of every two male children in grades K-6 play baseball in the county recreation program and one out of three play basketball.¹⁵ Interestingly, in the past few years, the greatest growth in the youth athletic program has come from increases in girls' youth sports.

The growth of the youth athletic program has placed heavier demands on the County's recreation staff. Youth programs have also stretched the resources and facilities of community volunteer organizations and municipalities. Community organizations provide coaches and sponsors. They also maintain most of the facilities used by the County recreation department for games and practices. Increases in participation and the rising cost of uniforms, equipment, maintenance and utilities have created greater financial demands on the resources of the community.

¹⁵ From studies conducted by the Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department.

County Programs Serving Special Populations

Special Olympics

From 1995 to 2000, participation in local Special Olympics increased from 300 to nearly 500 athletes. These individuals and teams are involved in year-round practice for thirteen different events including alpine skiing, bocce, cycling, golf, volleyball, table tennis, track and field, softball, basketball, skating, bowling, soccer and weightlifting. Adaptive games were added to the Spring Games, which are designed especially for lower functioning participants. Over 1,000 individuals give their time each year to volunteer for Special Olympics.

Visually Impaired

Special Populations provides visually impaired individuals with activities that include ceramics, cookouts and trips. The visually impaired also participate in other activities that are offered to the general public.

Funsters

Funsters is a program that provides activities for physically handicapped adults. This group meets twice a week at the Funsters Center on College Street in Graham. Activities include educational games, fun games, cookouts, trips, bowling, ceramics and a weeklong camp.

Senior Adults

From 1997 to 2000, senior participation increased to over 1,700 participants. Senior adults are offered a wide variety of activities that include day trips, overnight trips, arts and crafts, luncheons, card games, Senior Games, Silver Arts, exercise classes, and other varied activities. The recreation department also administers a senior golf association with over 270 participants.

Latinos

Over the last decade the Hispanic/Latino population of Alamance County has grown significantly. Observers have noted that the southern Graham/Haw River area in particular has witnessed a heavy influx of Latinos in the general population. Estimates are that as much as 80% of the Haw River Elementary School, for example, is comprised of Latino children. These dramatic changes in the composition of the population also have impacts on the nature of recreation facilities and programs being offered. Reportedly, it is not unusual, for example, to see 75-100 school-aged Latino children playing "pick up" soccer from about 4:00 in the afternoon until after dark each day at Pleasant Grove and Eli Whitney Recreation Centers. Obviously, the demand for soccer fields has risen dramatically with the rapid increase in the Latino population group. Communicating with this population group also requires that service providers, if they are to be effective in their work, develop at least a basic knowledge of the Spanish language. While there are no specific programs as yet serving the Latino population, the mere presence of this growing population group is having significant impact on the recreation services provided by the County.

County Sponsored Special Activities/Events

Special events and activities are held throughout the year. Past events have included the "Haunted Plantation" at Cedarock Historical Farm (October), Kite Day (March), the Easter Egg Hunt at Cedarock Park (April), "Concerts in the Park" at Cedarock Park, (June – September), Skeet Shooting Tournament, (September), and Junior Fishing Rodeo (September).

County Use of Community Owned, School Owned and Municipally Owned Facilities

As noted previously, the Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department uses over 20 community-owned, school-owned and municipal-owned facilities and fields around Alamance County to operate its countywide athletic program. With regard to the public school system in particular, the Department seeks to make use of school recreation facilities after normal school hours. For example, the County will contract with a teacher at a particular school to monitor and supervise an after-school or evening recreation program (e.g. basketball) at a school gymnasium.

This type of cooperative programming involving County school properties is highly desirable in that it maximizes the use of publicly-owned facilities, and allows the County to offer recreation services at very cost effective levels to the County's taxpayers. For this reason, the County Recreation/Public School relationship should be further investigated as to how these facility-sharing opportunities can be expanded. Many other public school systems, for example, have developed formal policies and written agreements with local government recreation departments concerning the joint use of school facilities. This type of written agreement should be explored and implemented, if possible, for the benefit of all Alamance County residents. Such agreements may set forth certain privileges, conditions and requirements under which County Parks Department may gain access to school facilities. Included in the agreement, for example, might be provisions addressing issues such as:

- Details regarding access by County Parks to classrooms, gymnasiums (or comparable facilities), and designated outdoor athletic areas at each public school site.
- Fees and charges, if any, for use of designated schools sites.
- A schedule of dates for use of school facilities, with priority given to school functions first, County parks functions second, and other group functions third.
- Identification of whom, specifically, will be responsible for coordinating school site recreational activities for County Parks and for County Schools.
- The procedure by which equipment or permanent improvements on school property, installed by County Parks, may be approved by County Schools.
- Assignment of responsibilities for care of school property and for repairs to school properties should damage occur during County sanctioned or run recreation programs

County Parks and Recreation Budget

The Alamance County Park and Recreation Department has an annual operating budget of about \$1 million. A review of budget amounts from fiscal year 1990/91 to 2000/01 shows considerable variation in budget increases or decreases, from a 1.1% decrease in 1995/96 to a 17% increase in 1999/00.

Budget History		
Fiscal Year	Budget Amount	% Increase or (Decrease)
1990-1991	\$622,505.00	1.6%
1991-1992	684,600.00	9.1%
1992-1993	704,911.00	2.8%
1993-1994	741,591.00	4.9%
1994-1995	800,856.00	7.4%
1995-1996	791,472.00	(1.1%)
1996-1997	812,731.00	2.6%
1997-1998	830,008.00	2.0%
1998-1999	857,255.00	5.5%
1999-2000	1,003,033.00	17.0%
2000-2001	1,122,619.00	11.8%

County Matching Grant Program

The local Matching Grant Program was established in 1980 by the Alamance County Board of Commissioners to assist community organizations to upgrade and expand community recreation facilities. As of the year 2000, Alamance County had contributed \$180,336 to the Matching Grant Program and community organizations had spent \$940,845 on matching grant projects. Over \$1,000,000 had been spent to upgrade community athletic facilities and parks with over 83 percent of the money being raised by community organizations.

Need for a Master Parks and Recreation Plan for Alamance County

Recently, the County has been discussing the need for a master park and recreation plan. Such a plan would likely include demographic research, a needs assessment, proposed locations for future parks, and estimates of funding needed for park development. One important benefit of having the master parks and recreation plan is to identify in advance those areas of the county most in need of public park facilities. Then, if a property owner steps forward with an offer to dedicate land for a park to the County, the plan is able to confirm whether such an offering of land is in the right location to serve the needs of the county. In the absence of such land donations, the County can nevertheless identify where parkland might best be acquired.

A second benefit of preparing such a plan is to be able to secure grant monies in support of park development. Most state and federal grant programs for park development require (or at least look much more favorably upon communities that have) a master parks and recreation plan in place. This demonstrates to the grant-funding agency that the community has given careful thought to its parks and recreation needs and has likely involved the public in identifying those needs. In fact, a key to the successful implementation of any master parks plan is on-going citizen involvement, the formation of public-private partnerships, and the need to balance park improvements throughout the community.

Unfortunately, just as the time may be right to pursue the development of a master parks plan, current budget constraints have made funding for such a plan unlikely at this time. The on-going budget crisis in State government has caused the Governor to withhold certain tax reimbursements from local governments in North Carolina. This loss of these normally anticipated funds has, in turn, created a serious financial shortfall for Alamance County as well as most other local governments in North Carolina. For this reason, the master plan has been placed on a “back burner” until such time as finances allow.

Dedication of Land or Funding for Parks and Open Space in the Unincorporated County

A century ago, it was quite common for developers to include parks and open space as a routine part of any new subdivision. Real estate advertisements of the period often made note of recreation amenities planned and built into the neighborhood from the start. This form of enlightened self interest helped sell lots to a buying public which sought the “fresh air and open spaces” of the suburbs. It also contributed to the creation of communities that had a proper balance of development and open space from the outset. Unfortunately, this balanced approach to community building was not to last. Sometime after the Second World War, many “subdividers” discontinued the practice of setting aside open space, thereby keeping all acreage for potential lots.

To help address this change in development practice many states, including North Carolina, passed enabling legislation to correct for the loss of open space. North Carolina state law, for example, allows cities and counties to require new subdivisions to set aside or “dedicate” a certain proportion of a subdivision for open space and recreation. For example, a “10% dedication standard” would require that five acres of a fifty acre subdivision be reserved for open space. Alternatively, a “1 acre per 20 housing unit” standard would require that a 100 housing unit development also set aside five acres for open space. Either approach is acceptable under State enabling legislation.

Instead of setting aside land, an even better way to ensure that parkland keeps up with new growth, is to require a “*fee in lieu of land dedication*”. Under this arrangement, fees paid by the developer are deposited into a special trust fund set up by the County specifically for parks, open space and recreation.

Further, the County may set up several trust funds corresponding to the specific geographic area of the County within which the funds are collected. In this way, monies available for park development are commensurate with the level of demand created by new development in each part of the County.

The *fee in lieu of land dedication* option is intended to correct for situations where a small subdivision would not yield sufficient open space to be useful. Ten percent of the land area in a small, five-acre subdivision, for example, would yield only one half acre of open space. Such a small acreage may not be sufficient to allow for useful recreation facilities, and may also create maintenance difficulties. (Either the open space would have to be maintained by just a few homeowners, or the County would have to spend an inordinate amount of time traveling to and maintaining a large number of very small parks.) Another advantage of the *fee in lieu of dedication* option is that it ensures that the small subdivision, not just the larger ones, will provide for a proportionate (even if small) share of the open space needs of area residents.

Alamance County currently has no provision in its subdivision regulations regarding land dedication or fees in lieu of land dedication. In light of the fact that the County is continuing to witness significant population growth and subdivision activity, this type of provision is something the County should seriously consider.

Haw River Trail

The Haw River is one of the most important, if not the most important natural feature in Alamance County. With its headwaters located near Kernersville, the Haw River enters Alamance County in the northwest corner near Altamahaw. The Haw flows in a generally northwest to southeast direction passing to the north and east of the Burlington-Graham urban center. From Graham, the river continues on through Swepsonville and the Saxapahaw area before forming the county line between Alamance, Orange and Chatham Counties in the extreme southeastern corner of the county. After leaving Alamance County, it flows through 12 miles of white-water in Chatham County to form 80% of the flow into Jordan Lake. The Haw then becomes the Cape Fear a few miles below the Jordan Lake dam, at the confluence with the Deep River. Some 200 miles later, the Cape Fear empties into the Atlantic below Wilmington.

Once viewed primarily as a cheap source of power for the plentiful mills of Alamance County, and later relegated to the role of a convenient receptor of industrial and municipal waste, the Haw was, for much of the 20th century out of sight and out of mind. Then, in the mid 1990's, a handful of interested persons "rediscovered" the Haw for its beauty and recreational potential. In 1996, the local chapter of a group known as Haw River Trails met for the first time to spearhead a drive for a greenway and canoe trail on the Haw. In 1999 another group known as NC Big Sweep entered the picture and recruited four landowners to provide free public access to the river. That same year, the City of Graham received a grant to develop an access site and construct a greenway along the Haw.

By October 2000, six access sites were officially opened along a 28-mile stretch of the river, from Altamahaw in the northwest to Saxapahaw in the southeast. Sponsors of these first few access sites included Glen Raven, Inc., North Carolina Preservation, Bob and MaLinda Pengell, Ernie and Len Paschal, the City of Graham, Bill Powell, George Bason, NC Big Sweep, the Town of Swepsonville, and the Saxapahaw Community Chest. In addition to the early involvement of these initial sponsors, the Haw River Trail has subsequently garnered support from the City of Burlington, which provided two additional access sites and support for a 3-mile section along the river for development of a greenway. Providers of outdoor equipment and adventure tour companies have also been involved.

Today, the Haw River Trail has as its mission the following:

"Provide free access to a land and water based public recreation trail from the Headwater Spring to the Cape Fear. Place all easement and lands acquired for this purpose into a land trust, to maintain open space for our citizens, in perpetuity, while preserving the natural buffers along the Haw River and its tributaries, for the purpose of protecting water quality."

Regarding natural buffers in particular, advocates of the Haw River Trail foresee a minimum 100-foot conservation easement (or other form of property acquisition) along both sides of the river, where hikers can travel on a continuous greenway corridor for the length of the trail system. Among the first property owners to fulfill this vision was Glen Raven, Inc. During the fall of 2000, the company announced a long-range plan for the use of more than 200 acres of undeveloped land spanning the Haw River. Included in the plan were the creation of public walking trails and a forest renewal project. Also included was the company's intention to establish 150-foot wide forest buffers along wetlands and streams on the Glen Raven Acreage.

Consistent with this vision, the County should seek to make property owners aware of the tax benefits of donating conservation easements along the Haw River, as well as for other significant natural areas in the County.

PARKS AND RECREATION POLICIES

Policy 10.1: Future park development and open space preservation shall be planned to provide for the proper distribution of recreation and open space opportunities within the planning area.

Policy 10.2: In determining future sites for park, recreation and water access facilities, multiple objectives for natural area conservation, visual enhancement, promotion of cultural and historic preservation, watershed and flood prone area protection shall be considered.

Policy 10.3: Alamance County shall continue to work cooperatively with the County school system to maximize the use of recreation facilities located at existing public school sites, and to foster the joint development of additional public park facilities at new public school sites.

Policy 10.4: Identifying, planning for and developing a system of open space greenways and hiking trails within the county shall be supported. The use of (1) natural corridors such as streams and floodplains, and (2) man-made corridors such as utility and transportation rights-of-way and easements, shall be emphasized.

Policy 10.5: Alamance County shall work proactively with other local and state governments, utility companies, industries and other major landowners in the development of walking and bicycling trails for the public.

Policy 10.6: Land acquisition for new park, recreation, and open space sites in advance of need shall be encouraged to achieve desirable locations at cost effective levels.

Policy 10.7: All new residential development shall provide for adequate open space and recreation area, or funding to purchase such areas, in proportion to the demand created by the development. This may be determined according to the number of dwelling units in the development and/or by a percentage of the total acreage in the development.

Policy Section 11: Paying for Infrastructure and Services

The Alamance County Situation

Alamance County is among the most fiscally conservative local governments in North Carolina. Statistics on effective tax rates among all 100 counties in the state have placed Alamance County among the lowest five to ten counties for the past fifteen years. While this Section was being written, the County Commissioners adopted the new County budget for fiscal year 2002-2003. Due to a number of financial issues beyond the County's control, the property tax rate was increased for the coming year by a little over 19%. (More on property taxes later in this Section.) Major financial issues affecting the budget

include rapidly escalating Medicaid costs, continued growth in school system enrollment, flat retail sales, and the on-going State budget crisis, which affects the County's reimbursements from the state. Even in the midst of these "budget straining" circumstances, Alamance County's tax rate continues to place it among the lower one fourth of all counties in the state.

In the context of this tax and service environment, growth and development is spilling over into Alamance County from its urbanized neighbors to the east and west. This spillover effect is particularly evident in the eastern/southeastern part of Alamance County, which has rapidly become a major bedroom community for people who work in Orange County and the Research Triangle area but prefer to reside in Alamance County.

While this growth provides construction jobs, and an increase in primarily the residential tax base for the county, the actual benefits to county tax revenues versus the costs associated with such growth are debatable. Specifically, numerous studies in communities across the country have found that most residential development does not pay for itself in terms of the services it requires versus the taxes it pays. A study by the American Farmland Trust found, for example that, on average, residential development requires about \$1.15 to \$1.25 in services for every \$1 it pays in taxes. Farmland, in contrast, requires only about 30 cents in service demands for every \$1 it pays in taxes.

Like farmland, commercial and industrial properties require less in the way of services and therefore carry more than their burden of the County's operating costs. The American Farmland Trust found that for every dollar paid in taxes, commercial development requires only about 35 cents back in service costs. Thus, while a \$1 million investment in housing and a \$1 million investment in commercial property may generate the same property tax revenues, the commercial property has no children to be educated, no social services to be administered, and no health problems to be tended to. Commercial and industrial developments generally provide for a favorable cost/benefit analysis to the County's balance sheet, while residential development does not.

New Residents Create Demand for Services and Infrastructure

As noted elsewhere in this plan, Alamance County grew at a brisk pace during the 1990's, roughly paralleling the growth rate of the State as a whole. State projections call for the county to continue to grow at a rapid pace for at least the next twenty years. (See Growth Factors Analysis, section on Population Growth). Of the projected increases in population, the majority of such growth is from in-migration rather than births over deaths. Fundamentally, this means that demand for new infrastructure is being driven largely by new residents moving into the county, rather than by the offspring of existing residents.

In a general sense, new residents create demand for new housing that, in turn, generates a demand for infrastructure and services. While some of the costs of such infrastructure are paid in part by the developer, (and then the homebuyer), a substantial portion of these up front capital improvement costs are often absorbed by all taxpayers in the county. Thus, while the developer usually pays for water and sewer lines and streets within or leading up to his subdivision, the general taxpayer often foots the bill for the costs of major water and sewer trunk lines, new or expanded water and sewage treatment plants, new schools, new parks, fire and rescue facilities, major roadway improvements, and so forth. Even more significantly, taxpayers in the more rural parts of the county may never see a new school or park in their area but, through their property taxes, wind up paying for such facilities in the growth areas of the county.

Alternatives for Meeting Demand for Services and Infrastructure

Many of the up front costs for new services and infrastructure must be absorbed before the new residents have paid a significant amount of local property taxes. In the case of low to mid-priced housing, such developments may *never* generate sufficient taxes to pay for the services they demand, much less the upfront capital improvement costs they generate. The County, therefore, faces difficulty financing immediate start-up costs for capital improvements through existing general revenues. And, as noted above, existing residents end up paying for capital facilities that largely benefit the new residents.

(Consider new residents moving into the southeastern part of Alamance County, for example, and the new school facilities that must be built to serve the expanding population of children there.)

Communities like Alamance County face three basic alternatives to deal with the costs of growth:

- (1) Raise taxes on everybody,
- (2) Allow the quality of services to deteriorate by not matching new facilities with growth
- (3) Use revenue sources tied more directly to the growth.

Alamance County Existing Revenue Sources for Facilities and Services

Local governments in North Carolina are authorized by the General Assembly to employ certain specific methods of generating revenues to pay for government services and capital facilities. Revenue sources generating substantial dollars for county services and facilities typically include property taxes/general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, sales taxes, special purpose taxes and district taxes. These local sources are supplemented by State and Federal grants, as well as the intergovernmental transfer of funds that are usually restricted as to their use. Major sources of revenue currently in use by Alamance County (or available for use) are described in greater detail in the paragraphs following.

Property taxes have traditionally been the revenue-generating mainstay of most local governments in North Carolina. One advantage of property taxes is that the amount that residents are taxed generally corresponds with their ability-to-pay, assuming that the value of property owned is an approximate measure of ability-to-pay. The chief disadvantage is that the amount of taxes paid may bear little or no relationship to the costs of services required. In fact, there may be an inverse relationship, in that residents of lower value housing, who pay less in property taxes, may require more in terms of educational costs, community health services and other forms of public assistance. For fiscal year 2002-2003, the Alamance County property tax rate has been set at 50 cents per \$100 valuation, up from 42 cents per \$100 for 2001-2002. Property taxes provide for some 54% of the County's General Fund Revenues.

General Obligation Bonds (GOB's) are used by local governments to borrow money now to be repaid over time. They are not a tax per se, but rather a liability for which property taxes must typically be raised to pay off the bond. As mentioned above, communities must often come up with the funding to build new infrastructure before the growth that creates the demand for the infrastructure has paid a significant amount of local property taxes. To address this problem of timing, one response of local governments has been to issue bonds for the new infrastructure and facilities. School bonds, for example, spread the cost of the infrastructure over a number of years, even decades. They also spread the cost of new school construction over the entire tax base of the community rather than just the newcomers who are most often generating the demand for the new school. The State of North Carolina sets limits as to how much indebtedness a county may assume through the issuance of GOB's. Alamance County's bonded indebtedness is well under the limits.

Revenue bonds may also be used by local governments to borrow money now to be repaid over time. The difference between revenue bonds and general obligation bonds is that the money raised to pay off the revenue bond can only come from the *revenues* (fees or income) of the project being funded. This means, for example, that a revenue bond to fund the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant could only be paid off by the ratepayers who are tied into the sewer system. The money to pay off the bond is typically included in the monthly utility bills for the service being provided. This type of charge is also often referred to as a *user fee*, because only the *users* of the facility are required to pay the fee. Residents in parts of the local government jurisdiction not served by centralized water and sewer, therefore, would not receive a monthly bill, and would therefore not pay a user fee for that service.

Basic Sales Tax. The statewide sales tax fund is administered by the State. One third of the receipts are distributed to counties and municipalities based on a pre-determined formula. Sales taxes are paid by everyone but are generally considered "regressive", in terms of each person's ability-to-pay. That is, low-income households tend to spend a greater proportion of their income on sales tax than do high-income households. Residents of Alamance County who work outside the county, and may therefore do much of their shopping outside the county (such as in Orange, Durham, or Guilford Counties), reduce the amount

of sales tax money coming back to Alamance County from the State. For fiscal year 2001-2002, retail sales tax revenues for Alamance County were \$16.15 million, down \$800,000 from the preceding year. For fiscal year 2002-2003, sales tax revenues have been estimated to be \$16.48 million, up \$300,000 from last year. Sales tax revenues make up about 19 to 20% of all general revenue funds.

Local Option Sales Tax. Alamance County, as authorized by the North Carolina General Assembly, may increase the local sales tax by modest amounts to provide a dedicated source of funds for infrastructure and services. Under state law, counties are required to earmark a percentage of the proceeds of additional sales tax collections for school capital outlays and debt, unless the county can demonstrate that such funding of schools is no longer needed. Beginning in December 2002, the County will be able to impose an additional one-half cent sales, unrestricted as to use, as recently authorized by the General Assembly.

Fuel Sales Tax for Public Transit. The Federal government collects a special tax of 16 cents on each gallon of gas sold, which is earmarked for use in support of mass transit. By law, this money can be returned to a local government serving the area in which it was collected to fund the operation of a mass transit system. In Alamance County, it is estimated that the fuel sales tax could return about \$600,000 per year to the City or the County government, if either chose to accept it. To date, neither the City nor the County has elected to enter into the business of public transit; therefore the money has been turned down each year. (See Policy Section on Transportation for more on this.)

Special District Taxes. Special district taxes can be levied upon approval by the County Commissioners to provide a specific service for which the districts are created. In Alamance County, *fire district taxes* are collected from properties not protected by a municipal fire department. There are 12 fire districts in Alamance County, each with their own local fire district commission. Four of the fire districts are operated by municipal governments. Each district sets its own property tax rate, which must be approved by the County Commissioners. For fiscal year 2001-2002 fire district tax rates ranged from 5 cents per \$100 dollars valuation to 9.5 cents per \$100 valuation. For fiscal year 2002-2003, fire district tax rates are expected to increase by an average of 1.1 cents per \$100 valuation. For the coming fiscal year, it is expected that these fire district tax rates will generate about \$2.8 million, up from \$2.5 million during 2001-2002. Fire district taxes are not part of the general revenue fund, but rather go into a special fire district fund specifically for that use.

Real Estate Excise Tax. North Carolina has a real estate excise tax of \$2 per \$1000 of value, half of which goes to the general fund of the county where it is collected. The county's portion may be used for any public purpose. The other half, minus a small amount for the county's costs of collection, is forwarded to the state, where it is used to fund the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund. In fiscal year 2000-2001 Alamance County received \$357,000 from the real estate transfer tax. In addition to the statewide tax, the General Assembly has authorized a few counties, by special enabling legislation, to levy their own "real estate land transfer tax". (See section below on revenue sources tied more closely to growth.)

Local (Hotel) Occupancy Tax. Special purpose taxes can be created for a wide variety of uses. One special purpose tax used in many counties in North Carolina is the *Room or Local Occupancy Tax*. Hotel, motel and other temporary lodging businesses collect an extra tax from all room rentals, the majority of which is typically used for promoting tourism. Special legislation must be requested from the General Assembly to enact this tax. Alamance County has enacted a 3% local occupancy tax that generated \$511,000 in 2000-2001 and 517,000 in 2001-2002. Estimates for the 2002-2003 budget have revenues from the local occupancy tax pegged at \$472,000.

Solid Waste Management Fees. As noted in the Solid Waste Management Section of this plan, Alamance County's landfill operation is run as an enterprise fund. This means that the revenues generated by the landfill are at least sufficient to pay for the daily operation of the landfill and related programs plus long-term improvements and eventual closure costs. No money is transferred from the County's General Fund to help pay for this service. However, modest amounts of revenue may be transferred from any surpluses generated by the landfill program to help pay for other county services. Income generated by the landfill includes primarily tipping fees, paid by municipalities and private haulers

to dispose of their truckloads of waste, and to a lesser extent, by individuals who drop off their waste at the landfill site. Tipping fees under the proposed 2002-2003 budget would be set at \$36 per ton, up from \$33 per ton the previous year, but still the lowest in the region. Disposal fees for individual (bagged garbage) and various other materials range from 25 cents per bag for recyclable materials to \$30 ton for construction debris. Payment for curbside garbage collection is paid by county residents and businesses directly to their haulers under franchise agreements authorized by the County. For fiscal year 2000-2001, total revenues generated by the landfill program amounted to about \$4 million compared to operating expenses of \$2.8 million. For 2002-2003 total revenues and operating expenses are expected to be about \$4.2 million.

Intergovernmental Transfers. Federal and state governments routinely transfer substantial funding to local governments. These monies may be *unrestricted* as to their use, or *restricted* as to their use. *Unrestricted* intergovernmental transfers have traditionally included reimbursements to local governments of certain taxes. These reimbursements include, for example, beer and wine taxes and the inventories tax. Unfortunately, the current budget crisis at the state level has caused the governor to withhold reimbursements that would normally be returned to local governments in the state. In Alamance County's case, the withholding of these reimbursements amounts to an unanticipated funding shortfall of nearly \$3 million for fiscal year 2002-2003. At the same time, restricted intergovernmental transfers of monies (those with strings attached, intended for specific programs such as social services, Medicaid, etc.) are expected to be nearly \$12.6 million. Restricted intergovernmental transfers will make up about 15% of the County's General Revenue Fund while unrestricted intergovernmental transfers will make up about 2%.

State and Federal Grants/Low Interest Loans. State and federal governments operate a variety of grant and low interest loan programs intended to foster specific objectives to be achieved at the local government level. Some grants come through entitlement programs, wherein the local government is guaranteed a certain amount of money based upon population, area income, or other factors. Other grant funds come through competition, in which local governments must prepare competitive applications in which the merits of their funding request are judged against the merits of all other funding requests. Whether such grants are by entitlement or competition, they must be used for the specified purpose of the program they are intended to carry out. In addition, these funds often must be leveraged through the use of County matching funds.

Revenue Sources Tied More Directly To Growth

While many of the revenue sources described above are impacted in some way by growth in the county, there is considerable variability as to (a) where the money is coming from and (b) what the money is being spent on. In other words, *Who is paying the money?* and *Who is receiving the benefit of the facilities or services?* Some of the largest growth-related capital expenses that the county faces (e.g. new schools, parks, etc.) are funded by all taxpayers, even though the additional demand for and use of those new facilities may often be attributed directly to those persons moving into the county. Therefore, in addition to the above-described ways of generating revenue to pay for the costs of growth, many local governments employ other ways of generating revenue that are more closely tied to the growth itself. These include mainly impact fees and local excise taxes on land transfers. The merits of these two revenue sources are discussed below.

Impact Fees

Impact Fees Defined.

Impact fees may be defined as one-time fees placed on new development, primarily for the purpose of paying for capital facilities (schools, roads, water, sewer, parks, fire stations, etc.) needed as a result of growth. Impact fees are used widely throughout the United States, by small and large cities and counties. Generally, the fast growing states of Colorado, California, and Florida have led the rest of the states in their use. North Carolina presently has several laws that allow the use of some form of impact fee. Section 153A-274 allows for counties to construct and operate public enterprises including sewer, solid waste systems, and airports. The County may collect rents, rates, fees (including connection fees), or

charges for the financing of these utilities. Most often, however, counties in North Carolina seek special enabling legislation to employ them.

Survey of Area Counties Regarding Impact Fees.

Recently, the Alamance County Planning Department conducted a survey of several counties in the central piedmont of North Carolina regarding their use of impact fees. Camden County, for example, employs impact fees for *water and sewer services* which range between \$950 and \$4,450 depending upon the location of the project in the county. Chatham County charges a *school impact fee* of \$1,500 per single-family dwelling and \$500 for multi-family dwellings. Davie County does not have impact fees per se, but does charge a *fee in lieu of land dedication for parks and recreation facilities* as allowed under the State's subdivision enabling legislation. Orange County charges a *school impact fee* of \$3000 per single family home or multi-wide mobile home and \$1,420 per unit for multi-family attached dwellings and single wide mobile homes. At the time of the survey, Guilford, Moore, Randolph and Transylvania Counties did not charge impact fees. In exploring the use of impact fees in Alamance County, it was found that if the County were to charge a \$1,000 impact fee for each new housing unit placed in the unincorporated area during 2001, a fund balance of approximately \$940,000 would have been generated to help pay for needed infrastructure. While this amount of money would not be sufficient to build, for example, a new elementary school, it would help offset some of the costs of the new school that would otherwise have to be paid for by all taxpayers in the county.

Differing Views on Impact Fees

Opponents of impact fees would argue that such fees tax only a few residents to pay for facilities that benefit everyone in the county. Proponents, on the other hand, would counter that a new school in a rapidly growing area, filled entirely with students only from the rapidly growing area, does not benefit county taxpayers in other parts of the county far removed from the new growth.

Opponents of impact fees would argue that they only hurt the first time homebuyer who is likely a resident of the county anyway. Proponents, on the other hand, would counter that population increases in any rapidly growing area are almost always due to the in-migration of new residents, rather than births over deaths or relocation of existing residents.

Opponents of impact fees would argue that the developer already pays for his own infrastructure, so he shouldn't be charged twice. Proponents, on the other hand, would counter that most of the infrastructure installed by the developer relates only to the immediate confines of his own development, and does not address "big ticket" off-site infrastructure costs (i.e. schools, parks, sewer trunk lines, treatment plants, etc.)

Opponents of impact fees would argue that they impose a cost on new homebuyers that previous generations of homebuyers did not have to pay. Proponents, on the other hand, would counter that while this is true, the era of "cheap" federal and state money for infrastructure has come and gone, and local governments must adjust their ways accordingly. Further, proponents would ask whether long time residents should keep paying over and over again for new infrastructure in other parts of the county. Many times, these more rural, long-time residents are not the beneficiaries of new parks, new schools, new central water and central sewer, because they live in an area with insufficient development density to warrant their provision.

Opponents of impact fees would argue that such fees are simply another way for local governments to siphon more money from growth into the general revenue fund. Proponents, on the other hand, would counter that impact fees should never be placed into general revenues. Rather, they are to be deposited only in specially designated capital reserve accounts, with monies earmarked only for use on the service or infrastructure for which the impact fee was collected. (i.e. school facilities fund, parks fund, sewer fund, etc.) Further, in larger jurisdictions, impact fees are often set-aside in area-based capital reserve accounts, with monies to be spent only in the geographical area within which the fee was collected. (i.e. northwest area park fund, central area park fund, etc.)

Finally, opponents of impact fees would argue that growth in general pays for itself; therefore, impact fees are unnecessary. This argument holds that growth broadens the tax base, thereby lowering taxes for everyone. Proponents, on the other hand, point out that statistics show no correlation between the size of a county and its tax rate. In fact, in many instances, larger counties in North Carolina have higher tax rates than smaller, less urbanized counties. If growth always paid its own way, the overall numbers would support that claim, but they simply don't.

The Intended Effect of Impact Fees

The primary purpose of impact fees is to avoid burdening current residents and property owners with the costs of providing infrastructure and services necessitated by new growth and development. To the extent possible, impact fees are intended to make development help pay its own way. Beyond the public finance issues surrounding impact fees, however, they have two other effects.

- (1) Impact fees place new housing on a more equal, price competitive footing with existing homes in the area. This means that the developer, and thus the potential homebuyer, must factor in the up front infrastructure costs in the price of a new home, compared to an existing home that already has infrastructure in place. In the largest sense, impact fees can have the far-reaching effect of encouraging the restoration/slowing the abandonment of the older housing stock in villages and towns.
- (2) Impact fees may have the effect of placing new housing in one community on a more level, price competitive playing field with housing in adjoining governmental jurisdictions. This means that the developer and thus the potential homebuyer must factor in the true costs of doing business in one community over another. The community that has no impact fees, for example, is no longer "giving away the store" relative to the neighboring community that is seeking to recoup some of the costs of growth through impact fees. As noted previously, Camden, Chatham, Davie and Orange Counties have all established some form of impact fee for facilities including water and sewer, schools and parks and recreation. Therefore, the taxpayers in these counties are sharing the costs of new infrastructure with newcomers rather than footing the bill alone.

Land Transfer Tax

Excise taxes are similar in function to sales taxes in that they are based on a simple percentage of the total value of the property being sold. A common form of excise tax used by counties in North Carolina to help pay for the costs of growth is an excise tax on real property transfers. To collect the tax, the local government must seek special enabling legislation from the General Assembly. From the local government perspective, an excise tax on real property transfers can be an effective source of revenue for capital projects. Real estate transfer taxes have been shown to generate significant amounts of revenue, particularly in counties where real estate values are high and property sales brisk. In rapidly growing, coastal oriented Dare County, for example, real estate transfer taxes have generated substantial revenues for the County's growth related infrastructure development.

Advantages of Land Transfer Tax

Excise taxes are different from impact fees in several ways. The amount of the excise tax, for example, does not have to be tied to the specific costs of a capital improvement program. Excise taxes do not have to be spent within a specified amount of time or be limited for use within any one part of the county. The flexibility of excise taxes allows them to fund capital facilities that may serve the community at large.

Disadvantages of Land Transfer Taxes

In several respects, the same differences between excise taxes and impact fees that make excise taxes advantageous to local government, also make them less equitable, perhaps, to the excise taxpayer:

- (1) Unless specifically exempted, excise taxes can hurt the “little guy” who just wants to do a simple transfer of land to a friend or relative.
- (2) Excise taxes do not have to be reserved for use in the same part of the county where they were collected. Thus, they are more of a general tax, less targeted to the real impacts of growth and development.
- (3) Excise taxes, unlike impact fees, truly do fit the description of “a tax on few individuals for the benefit of everyone.” Thus, while the transfer of land in most cases is related to *some* form of development, that is not always the case. Logically, therefore, a tax on all land transfers seems less equitable than the impact fee.

Capital Improvement Planning

In the context of local government, “capital improvements” may be defined as *major, non-recurring expenditures related to the purchase or construction of a permanent or relatively long lasting asset*. Capital improvements may include, for example, land acquisition, construction or major rehabilitation of a building or other facility, the purchase of major equipment, or any planning, feasibility, engineering or design study related to a major capital project.

Alamance County’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY 2003-2007 was submitted to the County Commissioners as part of the total county budget for 2002-2003. The CIP includes projects with an estimated total cost of \$26.4 million. The plan organizes 17 identified projects into four groups as follows:

1. Alamance Burlington School System Projects	\$13.1 million
2. Alamance Community College Projects	0.2 million
3. County Facilities Projects	12.1 million
4. <u>Economic Development projects</u>	<u>1.0 million</u>
TOTAL	\$26.4 million

Of note, nearly half of the total costs identified for the five-year planning period are related to school system projects. The plan also notes that “...*the County and the school system have appointed a committee, the Joint Facilities Oversight Committee, to develop recommendations for a major capital plan for the school system.*” (page 35) Given the projected population growth in the county over the next two decades, it is likely that future capital improvement plans will reflect further increases in the amount of funding necessary to keep pace with projected increases in student enrollment.

The plan also notes that about 73% of the revenues projected to be used to pay for the various facilities will likely come from County financing and County funds. Significantly, the plan concludes “*The CIP as presented will add approximately \$1.3 million in annual debt service payments during the next five years. Based on current trends, it seems unlikely that the County could assume this much additional debt service without a property tax increase.*” (page 36) Note that this five-year plan does not include the recommended school system facilities improvements to be forthcoming from the Joint Facilities Oversight Committee. Thus, if it is assumed that future school facilities will also be paid for out of the general tax base of the county, much greater property tax increases loom on the horizon. Consistent with the earlier part of this policy section, this raises the question as to whether the general property tax should continue to carry the burden of school system facility costs into the future.

Summary

As noted earlier in this policy section, there are three ways to address the issue of paying for infrastructure and services:

- (1) you can raise taxes on everyone (most often through the property tax)
- (2) you can allow infrastructure and services to deteriorate and/or fall behind demand (resulting in overcrowded schools, run down parks, etc.) or
- (3) you can employ revenue generators that are tied more directly to growth.

At present, Alamance County is using primarily the first method, and to a lesser extent, the second¹⁶. The third method has not been employed in Alamance County. This plan recommends that the county seek a more balanced, equitable approach, relying upon a combination of methods (1) and (3) in the future. There is no question that Alamance County is poised to grow considerably over the next ten to twenty years. The question is, who will pay for the costs of facilities and services spawned by that growth? Will the general taxpayer continue to subsidize the costs of new facilities required by new development, or will it be a shared responsibility of the general taxpayer and those moving into the county seeking the lower taxes that impact fees could help sustain?

POLICIES ON PAYING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Policy 11.1: The County shall support planning and budgeting for capital facilities, with particular emphasis on public schools, the community college, park land, storm water management facilities, and other necessary county facilities.

Policy 11.2: The costs of infrastructure, facilities and services related to new growth and development shall be borne, to a greater degree, by those responsible for the new growth. So as to lessen the burden on the general property tax payer, this approach may include impact fees on new development and user fees for new facilities.

Policy Section 12: Air Quality

Problems with Smog (High Ozone Levels) in the Piedmont Area of North Carolina

While Los Angeles and Atlanta have long been the poster children for U.S. cities with smog problems, many urban areas in North Carolina, particularly within the heavily populated Piedmont area, have developed ozone related smog problems that place them among the country's most polluted areas. Ozone, the key component in urban smog, is the most widespread air quality problem in North Carolina. Cars, trucks and other mobile sources account for about half of the ozone-forming emissions statewide and up to 90 percent in major metropolitan areas. In the upper atmosphere, ozone protects the Earth from harmful solar radiation. Near the ground, however, ozone is unhealthy to breathe, damages trees and crops, and can degrade outdoor materials. High ozone levels can be particularly harmful to young children, the elderly and people who suffer from respiratory ailments and asthma¹⁷, but also affect healthy citizens who work or exercise outdoors.

¹⁶ By and large, the County has done a good job of keeping facilities up, given the financial constraints it finds itself in. Nonetheless, there are some schools, for example, that are overcrowded.

¹⁷ Reports of asthma cases in Alamance County are significantly higher than the state average. Therefore, it is of greater than average importance that actions be taken to reduce ozone levels in the county.

Alamance County Recommended as a Non-Attainment Area

In 1997, ozone related problems nationwide led the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to adopt a stricter standard for acceptable ozone levels. In 1999, ozone levels exceeded the standard in North Carolina on 68 days, fifth highest among the 50 states. In 2000, the State Division of Air Quality identified all or part of some 40 counties in North Carolina for designation as *non-attainment areas*—areas unable to meet air-quality standards established to protect public health under the federal Clean Air Act. Alamance County was included among the 40 counties with significant air quality problems.

In addition to Alamance County, other counties recommended to EPA for non-attainment designation (in their entirety) included Cabarrus, Catawba, Cumberland, Davidson, Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Harnett, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Orange, Randolph, Rowan, Union and Wake. Partial county designations (primarily townships or municipal areas where monitors have shown high ozone levels) were recommended for Alexander, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Caswell, Chatham, Davie, Duplin, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Haywood, Iredell, Jackson, Johnston, Lenoir, McDowell, Northampton, Person, Pitt, Rockingham, Swain, and Yancey.

Interestingly, the air quality problems associated with these areas are mainly attributable to automobile emissions rather than industrial emissions. Areas designated as non-attainment are unable to meet air-quality standards established to protect public health under the federal Clean Air Act. The implications of being found in violation of air quality standards can be significant, including the withdrawal of federal funding for road construction within the non-attainment area.

State Actions to Reduce Air Pollution

During 2000 and 2001, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation designed to reduce air pollution. In 2000, for example, the N.C. Environmental Management Commission began developing new rules to require substantial reductions in NO_x emissions from power plants and other large industrial sources. Legislation was also passed that created new tools for fighting ozone-forming emissions from cars and trucks. The legislation required service stations to use a new, more effective method for testing the air-pollution controls on cars and trucks. Starting in 2002, the new testing method would be required in nine counties in the state: Cabarrus, Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Orange, Union and Wake. Then, over a period of several years, the auto emissions testing program would expand to include 48 counties by 2006. The expansion schedule follows:

- July 1, 2003 - Catawba, Cumberland, Davidson, Iredell, Johnston and Rowan.
- Jan. 1, 2004 - Alamance, Chatham, Franklin, Lee, Lincoln, Moore, Randolph and Stanly.
- July 1, 2004 - Buncombe, Cleveland, Granville, Harnett and Rockingham.
- Jan. 1, 2005 - Edgecombe, Lenoir, Nash, Pitt, Robeson, Wayne and Wilson.
- July 1, 2005 - Burke, Caldwell, Haywood, Henderson, Rutherford, Stokes, Surry and Wilkes.
- Jan. 1, 2006 - Brunswick, Carteret, Craven, New Hanover and Onslow.

In addition, Governor Hunt's 2000 Clean Air Plan prompted state legislation that requires low-sulfur gasoline statewide by 2004; offers incentives for alternative fuel vehicles; and provides more funding for rail and mass transit.

Most recently, Governor Easley convened the 4th Governors' Summit on Air Quality. On May 10, 2002, leaders from the Southeastern U.S. met in Charlotte, North Carolina, to continue their discussion on air quality challenges across the region, share information, and work toward regional solutions to air problems. The summit featured an update on the Southern Air Principles, an agreement between the governors of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee calling for a joint strategy to address smog, acid deposition, and haze.

The Southern Air Principles are:

- Each state must do its part to protect and improve air quality.
- Regional air quality problems must be addressed through regional approaches that address each state's unique qualities and needs.
- The southern states must continue to work together to develop and implement new strategies that will improve regional air quality, such as multi-pollutant regulatory strategies for reducing nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and mercury and innovative transportation and energy policies.

To fulfill these principles, the chief environmental officers of the four states were directed to consult, consider and formulate a proposed joint multi-pollutant strategy; to address the problems of ozone pollution, acid deposition and reduced visibility. They are then to report back to the governors on progress made.

State and Federal Agencies Involved in Improving Air Quality

North Carolina's State Division of Air Quality (DAQ) is responsible for protecting and improving outdoor air quality in North Carolina. To carry out this mission, the DAQ has programs for monitoring air quality, permitting and inspecting air emissions sources, and educating and informing the public about air quality issues. The DAQ, which is part of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, also enforces state and federal air pollution regulations. In North Carolina, the General Assembly enacts state air pollution laws, and the Environmental Management Commission adopts most regulations dealing with air quality. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has delegated the DAQ the authority to enforce federal laws and regulations dealing with air pollution in North Carolina.

Local Agencies Involved in Improving Air Quality

Because air quality issues typically transcend local area political boundaries, most air quality problems are addressed at the state or federal level. In recent years, however, some local governments have banded together with other nearby communities to forge regional alliances for better air quality. In North Carolina, there are five regional chapters of the *North Carolina Air Awareness Program*. The mission of the program is to provide education and outreach initiatives that will inform the public, business, and industry about air pollution, how it is formed, what effects it has and what can be done to prevent it. The goal is to prevent days exceeding the air quality standard and provide healthy air to all North Carolinians.

Included among the five regional chapters is the Triad Air Awareness program. Although the coordinator for the Triad chapter is housed in the Forsyth County Environmental Affairs Department in Winston Salem, the program encompasses the counties of Forsyth, Davie, Davidson, Randolph, Caswell, Rockingham, Guilford, and Alamance.

Individual Actions for Improving Air quality

Brochures developed by the Triad Air Awareness program note that anything that can be done to cut energy consumption helps reduce ozone-forming pollution. Examples include: car-pooling or other efforts to drive less; riding the bus, train or mass transit; riding a bicycle or walking; setting thermostats higher on air conditioners; keeping cars tuned up and tires properly inflated; obeying speed limits; and turning off appliances and lights when not in use. The website for the Triad Awareness program (<http://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/envaffairs>) contains many specific suggestions for reducing ozone forming pollutants.

Role of This Plan in Improving Air Quality

Significantly, the growth and development policies of this plan, if implemented, will work to cut down on automobile emissions. These policies include a range of options to reduce dependency on the automobile, including encouraging mixed-use developments and compact growth near job centers.

POLICIES FOR IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

Policy 12.1: Alamance County supports the educational efforts of the Triad Air Awareness Program in promoting voluntary individual and corporate actions to reduce harmful ozone levels in the Triad area.

Policy 12.2: Alamance County supports the multi-state effort of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee to work cooperatively to reduce smog, acid rain, and haze.

Policy 12.3: Alamance County shall encourage growth and development patterns that work to reduce dependence on the automobile, thereby reducing air pollution emissions.

Policy 12.4: Alamance County supports federal, state and local actions that balance the need for economic growth with the quality of our air and the general health of our citizens.

Policy 12.5: To improve local air quality, Alamance County shall explore the development of local ordinances based upon Triad Air Awareness program tips.

Policy Section 13: Water Quality¹⁸

Ground Water Quality

The quantity and quality of Alamance County's ground water resources continue to warrant careful monitoring. According to figures compiled by the State Division of Water Quality, there have been over 700 reported releases of contaminated materials into the groundwater of the county. These releases have included pollutants from fuel oil tanks, underground gasoline storage tanks, old landfill sites, and junkyards, to name a few. With approximately 500 new wells drilled in the county each year, county officials feel that it is becoming increasingly important to have reliable mapped information available on the location and nature of these releases¹⁹. With some large new subdivisions relying on individual wells, information about the location of possible contaminates could be critical for the health of these residents.

Sometimes, a single major drawdown, such as for a golf course or municipality, can cause a "cone of depression" around a well site, causing the water level in nearby wells to drop noticeably. In addition, too many smaller, but closely spaced drawdowns, combined with the on-going drought of the past several years, are believed to be causing existing wells in some developed areas to go dry.²⁰ Farmers, too, have been hard hit as the water table has dropped and new sources of water must be found, especially for livestock operations. Since about 1990, well borings in the county have increased to an average depth of 220 feet.

Other sources of pollution in some wells include improperly installed septic systems, or systems that are just plain old (Even properly installed septic systems have a limited life expectancy of about 25 years). High concentrations of housing (e.g. manufactured homes on relatively small lots) may allow sewage contaminants to reach improperly sealed wellheads. Cracks in the rock underlying septic fields can allow

¹⁸ Much of the information for this Section came from a personal interview with Carl Carroll, Environmental Health Director, Tim Green, County Health Director, and Phil Ross, Soil Conservation Service Director.

¹⁹ There is both good and bad news concerning the ability of the County to keep track of well, groundwater and pollution data. The good news is that Alamance County government already has in place a useful tool for documenting and retrieving mapped information. The County's *geographic information system (GIS)* housed in the Planning Department in the Alamance County Office Building in Graham, has the capability of storing and retrieving enormous amounts of information, including data on wells, groundwater and pollution release sites. At the same time, the bad news is that the County does not have sufficient staff to collect and enter groundwater information into the system. At present, the system is being used primarily to keep track of property tax information. Ultimately, decisions will have to be made as to whether the functions of the GIS system can be expanded to serve other purposes.

²⁰ Currently, wells in the western Elon area are reportedly drying up due to excessive withdrawals (relative to the resource) and on-going drought conditions.

leachate to go directly to the groundwater table. County officials indicate that about 80% of all lots inspected for septic tank suitability are approved. Those that are not approved are often located on *Iredell* or *Enon* soil types, typically found in the north and southwest areas of the county.

The growth and development patterns recommended in this plan would favor the use of centralized water supply and sewage treatment systems as opposed to individual wells and septic tanks in. As noted elsewhere in this plan, centralized utility services require that new developments cluster at locations close to existing urban centers, where water distribution and sewage collection lines are readily available.

Surface Water Supplies and Protected Watershed Areas

Residences and businesses located within the broad urban corridor that cuts east and west through the heart of the county rely upon just two municipal systems for their potable water (see Water and Sewer Services Section). These two municipal systems provide water to customers in Burlington, Elon, Gibsonville, Graham, Haw River, Mebane and the Village of Alamance. In addition, the City of Burlington recently agreed to sell water to the City of Greensboro.

Critical to the operation of both municipal systems are reliable sources of raw water. The table below summarizes the two municipal systems relative to their raw water supplies:

City of Burlington

<u>Water Treatment Plant</u>	<u>Source of Raw Water</u>	<u>Capacity of Reservoir</u>
J.D.Mackintosh, Jr. Water Treatment Plant	Lake Mackintosh Reservoir	7.5 billion gallons
Ed Thomas Water Treatment Plant	Stoney Creek Reservoir (City Lake) Lake Cammack (Burlington Reservoir)	400 million gallons 3.2 billion gallons

Cities of Graham and Mebane

<u>Water Treatment Plant</u>	<u>Source of Raw Water</u>	<u>Capacity of Reservoir</u>
Graham-Mebane Water Treatment Plant	Quaker Lake (Graham-Mebane Lake)	NA

Significantly, all four sources of raw water are located outside the corporate boundaries of the three cities, placing them within the planning jurisdiction of Alamance County. Responsibility for protecting the quality of waters flowing into these reservoirs therefore rests with the County. To do this, Alamance County participates in the State watershed protection program, a description of which follows.

Beginning in 1992, the State's Environmental Management Commission (EMC) promulgated a series of protection rules relating to urban land development within the state's water supply watersheds. Each water supply watershed is assigned to one of four classifications (I-IV), with different development rules applicable for each classification. Local governments are charged with responsibility for administering the rules for watershed areas within their planning jurisdiction. Within each watershed, land areas closest to the water supply, and therefore at greater risk for causing pollution, are identified as being within the *critical area* of the watershed. Specifically, the critical area is defined as: "*land within one-half mile upstream and draining to a river intake or within one-half mile and draining to the normal pool elevation of water supply reservoirs.*" (from Division of Water Quality website) Less restrictive rules apply to the so-called *balance of the watershed*, outside the *critical area*.

Alamance County's development standards within the *critical area* of the watershed call for a 2-acre minimum lot size. Within the *balance of the watershed*, a 1-acre minimum lot size is permitted. The table below summarizes the land acreage in square miles associated with each of the county's water supply watershed areas. The data does not include a few relatively small watershed areas within the jurisdiction of municipalities in the county. Note that some watershed areas serve to protect water supply reservoirs outside the county.

<i>Raw Water Source</i>	<i>Water Supply Watershed</i>	<i>Critical Area</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>Total area</i>
Lake Mackintosh Reservoir	Great Alamance Creek	5.5	--	5.5
Stoney Creek Reservoir (City Lake)	Stoney Creek	18.7	45.9	64.6
Lake Cammack (Burlington Reservoir)	as above	as above	as above	as above
Quaker Lake (Graham-Mebane Lake)	Back Creek	10.6	22.4	32.9
Outside County	Rocky River	--	8.7	8.7
Outside County	Haw River	--	5.3	5.3
Outside County	Cane Creek	--	2.6	2.6
Total land area (sq.miles) located within water supply watersheds in the unincorporated county: 119.5				

Thus, with a total of 434 square miles in all of Alamance County, and 119.5 in water supply watersheds, some 27.5% of the county falls under the watershed protection rules for the unincorporated county. While such rules do not stop development, they are important in protecting the drinking water supplies that tens of thousands of Alamance County residents and business owners have come to rely upon.

Point Sources and Non-Point Sources of Pollution

Fundamentally, water quality can be impacted by two sources of pollution- *point source* and *non-point source*. Examples of *point sources* of pollution include outfalls from industrial operations and municipal sewage treatment plants. Examples of non-point sources of pollution include stormwater runoff from urban development (i.e. roads, parking areas and roofs), golf courses, farmland and harvested woodlots. Another growing problem is the dumping of household chemicals, gasoline, oil, cleaning solvents, etc into storm drains. Many people do not realize that storm drains do not send their contents to a treatment plant, but rather into the closest stream or other body of water. (Some volunteer groups have taken to painting "no dump-leads to lake/river" signs on the pavement in front of storm sewer catch basins.)

Studies have shown that while point sources of pollution occasionally have serious spills of pollutants into surface waters, the most consistent sources of pollution in surface waters are from non-point sources. It is usually an accumulation of non-point source pollutants --parking lot and roadway runoff, fertilizers and pesticides, sedimentation from construction sites and cleared land, etc. -- that account for the majority of pollutants entering area streams. The construction of large, impervious surfaces associated with commercial and residential development accelerates the rate at which storm water reaches nearby receiving waters. Storm water draining from urban areas, as well as farmland, can also carry higher than normal levels of nutrients and other biodegradable materials that can create excessive oxygen demand for decomposing the material.

Adding to the problem of non-point source pollution is the fact that runoff from urban development and farmland is less easily identified, monitored and controlled than point sources of pollution. Point source discharges, such as sewage treatment plant outfalls, require a special discharge permit, issued by the State—a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit (NPDES permit). Until recently, no such similar permit was required for the multitude of non-point sources feeding into the surface water system. This is likely to change in the near future as the Phase II Stormwater Management requirements of the EPA come into effect (See next section).

New Federal and State Mandates Require Cities and Counties to Tackle Stormwater Issues

In response to concerns about stormwater impacts on water quality nation-wide, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, working in cooperation with environmental agencies at the state level, is implementing new stormwater management legislation. The new law is known as NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Stormwater Phase II. This stormwater management initiative is intended to treat stormwater runoff so that it does not pollute receiving surface waters. Compliance with the new law may have a sweeping effect on the way in which subdivisions, shopping centers and new roads are built and maintained.

The Phase Two Final Rule requires that the stormwater permitting authority (NPDES permitting agency) develop a set of designation criteria and apply them, at a minimum, to all small storm water management

systems located outside of an urban area serving a jurisdiction with a population of at least 10,000 and a population density of at least 1000 people per square mile.

The new rules require local governments like the City of Burlington and Alamance County to... “develop, implement and enforce a stormwater management plan...designed to reduce discharge of pollutants from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) to the maximum extent practicable and, [including, at a minimum, the following six measures]²¹:

- (1) A public education and outreach program on the impacts of stormwater discharges on water bodies to inform citizens of how to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. The public body may satisfy this requirement by developing a local education and outreach program; by participating in a statewide education and outreach program coordinated by the [NCDENR]; or a combination of those approaches.
- (2) A public involvement and participation program consistent with all applicable state and local requirements.
- (3) A program to detect and eliminate illicit discharges within the MS4. The program shall include a storm sewer system mapping component that, at a minimum, identifies stormwater outfalls and the names and location of all waters within the jurisdiction of the public body.
- (4) A program to reduce pollutants in any stormwater runoff to the MS4 from construction activities resulting in a land disturbance of greater than or equal to one acre. Implementation and enforcement of the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act, G.S. 113A-50 et seq., by either the Department or through a local program developed pursuant to G.S. 113A-54(b), in conjunction with the states NPDES permit for construction activities, may be used to meet this minimum measure either in whole or in part.
- (5) A program to address post-construction stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment projects that cumulatively disturb greater than or equal to one acre, including projects less than one acre that are part of a larger common plan of development or site, that discharge into the MS4 or into an interconnected MS4...
- (6) A pollution prevention / good housekeeping program for municipal operations that, addresses operation and maintenance, including a training component, to prevent or reduce pollutant runoff from those operations.”

According to a schedule set forth by federal and state agencies, participating local governments must have a plan in place for these measures by March 2003. They then have five years to implement the plan.

Alamance County Response to the Phase II (Stormwater Management) Program

At present, many details of the rules concerning the Phase II Program are still being worked out. Yet to be determined, for example, is to what degree cities and counties of various sizes will undertake these six measures. Some local governments may decide to address all six; others may only undertake some of the measures-- leaving the State to perform the others on behalf of the city or town.

Alamance County, after reviewing the proposed measures, is arguing the case that it be exempted from the program altogether--not because it objects to the intent of the program, but because it does not seem to fit Alamance County's situation. The County bases its position on several findings:

- The County does not own or maintain any municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4)—to which measures (3), (4) and (5) apply.

²¹ NPDES Phase II Temporary Rule Language March 2002 WQC Draft, page 6.

- The County is not responsible for any drainage or stormwater systems associated with streets or roads.
- The County does not review development plans for compliance with soil erosion and sedimentation control standards. Such plan review and compliance is handled by the State.
- Those portions of the unincorporated county that meet the population and density thresholds promulgated in the law are very small relative to the county's total planning jurisdiction. The areas that apparently qualify include just two very small areas—one on the north side of the Haw River, just north of Burlington's jurisdiction; the second a small area between Mebane and Haw River.
- The County does not manage "municipal operations" or equipment that would warrant a pollution prevention / good housekeeping program such as that suggested under measure (6).
- While the County could get involved in measures (1) public education and outreach and (2) public involvement and participation, the County believes that these responsibilities could be handled better and with greater efficiency by the State.

Vegetated Buffers Along Area Streams

Even without the advent of the Phase II Stormwater Program, the policies of this plan recommend that the County continue to foster land use practices that limit non-point source pollution into area surface waters. A good example of this is the County's requirement concerning the retention of vegetated buffers along area streams. To its credit, Alamance County requires that a 50-foot buffer be retained along all perennial (flowing year round) streams and a 100-foot buffer be provided adjoining all water supply reservoirs.

Just as an artificial silt fence at construction sites works to prevent soil and sediment from leaving the site, permanently vegetated buffers act to filter stormwater runoff headed for adjacent streams. Such a program of stream buffers does not single out anyone but applies equally to residential subdivisions, farms, golf courses, shopping centers, and state and local roads. Alamance County is wise to require vegetated buffers along year round streams and water supply reservoirs. It should also encourage existing waterfront property owners to voluntarily allow such buffers to grow up adjacent to rivers, lakes and creeks anywhere in the county.

Alamance Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA.

The Alamance Soil and Water Conservation District and the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service assist land users in the county in implementing best management practices that will protect and improve water quality. These best management practices reduce sediment and nutrient delivery to water bodies. Some examples of these best management practices are animal waste management systems, conservation tillage systems, nutrient management systems, streamside buffers (also mentioned above), erosion and sediment control systems, and many others. The use of these best management practices is encouraged for agricultural producers through various State and Federal cost sharing programs.

Delineation of Flood Plains/New Maps.

Alamance County's official floodplain maps are currently being restudied by FEMA. New maps are not expected for delivery for several years (2005-2006 at the earliest). While there will no doubt continue to be problems and limitations associated with these maps, it is nonetheless hoped that the newly delineated floodplain maps will be an improvement over the old ones. In light of the lessons learned in other parts of the state during Hurricane Floyd, many more people realize that the floodplain boundaries shown on these maps should not be taken for granted when developing close to a delineated floodplain.

Maintenance of Existing Drainage Ditches Not a County Function

A common misunderstanding concerning storm water management involves the maintenance of drainage ditches out in the county. Over time, an accumulation of sediment and debris works to reduce the carrying capacity of these ditches and may cause flooding. From time to time, property owners will call the County to request that something be done to correct a drainage problem. But since most counties in North Carolina do not have public works departments, the responsibility of keeping streams, floodplains, and storm drainage systems free of debris and properly functioning falls to the property owner, or to associations of property owners. (Of course, the state is responsible for drainage ditches along state maintained roads.) To restate, the County is not responsible for maintaining drainage facilities unless they are on County property or the County has accepted an easement that clearly defines the maintenance responsibility as being the County's.

Assessment of Other Stormwater Related Regulations and Policies.

Beyond the new NPDES Phase II program, there are a number of other existing federal, state and local regulations and policies that can influence stormwater management in Alamance County. The following is a brief review of them.

Forestry Activities: The North Carolina Sedimentation Pollution Control Act, passed in 1973, excluded forestry activities. The 1989 North Carolina Legislature amended the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act to require forestry activities to follow the Forest Practices Guidelines promulgated by the State (15 NCAC 11.0101-.0209). The guidelines are intended primarily to prevent soil and debris from entering area waterways. They do not address the increase in stormwater runoff that occurs when a large amount of tree cover is removed.

Agricultural Activities: Unless covered by specific legislation for particular water bodies, agricultural practices are not governed by regulations concerning stormwater runoff in North Carolina.

Sedimentation Erosion Control Plan Approval from the North Carolina Division of Land Quality: A Sedimentation Erosion Control Plan must be approved for development activities that will disturb one or more acres of land. The primary purpose of the sedimentation erosion control plan is to reduce sediment runoff during and after construction. These regulations do not address the proper design of stormwater facilities or potential on-site or off-site flooding.

NC Department of Transportation Requirements: The NC Department of Transportation has adopted stormwater runoff standards for roadways that are to become part of the NC DOT right-of-way system. These requirements address primarily the design capacity of culverts, storm sewers and roadside ditches. While the NC DOT requirements identify the need to avoid designs that would cause flooding, there is no specific review mechanism in place to assure that that requirement is achieved.

Alamance County Subdivision Ordinance: The Alamance County subdivision ordinance has no specific standards for reviewing proposed drainage systems associated with proposed residential developments. County officials rely upon the State to promulgate and enforce standards concerning drainage systems.

Alamance County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance: The Alamance County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance is the standard Federal Emergency Management Agency floodplain ordinance. The ordinance defines what can and cannot be done in the Special Flood Hazard Areas as shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps and flood boundary and floodplain maps. These regulations generally require structures built in the floodplain to be constructed at or above the Base Flood Elevation and to certain standards. These regulations also prohibit encroachments into the floodway unless it can be demonstrated that the encroachment causes no increase in the flood level.

Recommendations for Local Stormwater Regulations

The following section sets forth recommendations for local stormwater regulations as applied to development in Alamance County. It should be noted that these recommendations do not address

activities associated with forestry and agriculture. Because these two activities are governed by federal and state regulations, the County is not in a position to influence changes in forestry and agricultural stormwater management practices. Further, no suggestions are made for changes in other state or federal regulatory programs. Rather, recommendations for regulatory improvement are offered on just two sets of local government standards: The Alamance County Subdivision Ordinance and adoption of a local Stormwater Management Ordinance. The recommendations follow.

Preparation of a County-Wide Comprehensive Drainage and Flood Management Plan

Recommendation includes

- (1) Identifying drainage issues and problem areas in the County
- (2) Analyzing the causes of these problems through fact finding and public involvement
- (3) Suggesting a range of actions to address existing problems and prevent future problems, coordinated for maximum effectiveness.
- (4) Providing a factual basis and policy foundation to support two additional action steps

Amendments To The Alamance County Subdivision Ordinance.

The ordinance may include specific guidelines and limitations concerning the impact of developments on downstream property owners and water quality.

The Adoption of a Local Stormwater Management Ordinance.

The ordinance may include the establishment of specific design standards that must be satisfied prior to approval of any development. Such design standards should reduce the types of flooding problems and impacts on water quality from future development.

WATER QUALITY POLICIES

Policy 13.1: Alamance County's ground water resources shall receive a level of protection commensurate with their enormous value, particularly for residents and farmers in rural areas. Efforts shall be made to monitor the quantity and quality of groundwater resources, with an eye toward preventing pollution or excessive drawdowns while also protecting users from contaminated water.

Policy 13.2: Runoff and drainage from development, forestry and agricultural activities shall be of a quality and quantity as near to natural conditions as possible, with special emphasis given to properties within water supply watershed areas.

Policy 13.3: Development that preserves the natural features of the site, including existing topography and significant existing vegetation, shall be encouraged.

Policy 13.4: The development and maintenance of a countywide comprehensive drainage and flood management plan, including public and private actions in support of plan implementation, shall be supported.

Policy 13.5: The environmental benefits of properly designed, naturally vegetated roadside drainage swales shall be recognized. Curb and gutter shall be reserved to developments that are urban in character (i.e. less than 10,000 square foot lot sizes) and that are served by adequate stormwater collection, retention and slow release facilities

Policy 13.6: The County supports policies, plans and actions that serve to protect the quantity and quality of the county's water supply reservoirs by preventing soil erosion and sedimentation, and by controlling the quality of stormwater runoff entering the reservoirs.

Policy 13.7: Stormwater runoff, as it affects water quality in area streams, lakes and reservoirs, shall receive a high level of priority in development review and standards.

Policy 13.8: Alamance County supports the efforts of the Alamance Soil and Water Conservation District and the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service to assist land users in the county in implementing best management practices that will protect and improve water quality.

Policy 13.9: Alamance County requirements concerning the retention and management of natural vegetation in buffer areas along its creeks, rivers, lakes and reservoirs shall continue to receive strong support.

Policy 13.10: Development activities in the 100-year floodplain shall be carefully controlled. If development must occur, low intensity uses such as open space, recreation, and adequately buffered agricultural activities shall be preferred.

Policy Section 14: Economic Development

The Organizational Structure for Economic Development

Economic development in Alamance County involves many organizations, businesses and individuals working together to identify, recruit and assist in the location and expansion of new business and industry. However, the formal organization for economic development centers on the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce. In 1986, the Alamance County Commissioners entered into an agreement with the Chamber to become the lead agency for economic development in the county. Under this agreement, the Chamber receives an annual monetary contribution from the County, but must also rely upon the financial support of its members for the bulk of its funding.

The Executive Director of the Chamber reports to the Board of Directors for the Chamber, which, in turn, leads the general membership. There is also an eight-person Economic Development Committee that serves as a sounding board and source of guidance for the Executive Director.

In this role, the Chamber of Commerce coordinates site visits of industry representatives, and works with the appropriate local and state officials on all aspects of economic development. The Chamber also maintains up to date information on population, building permits, schools, unemployment rates and a whole host of statistics. The Chamber also tracks industrial sites and buildings available for sale or lease. Working relationships are maintained with city, county, and state governing bodies, utility companies, and professional associations, all with the purpose of fulfilling information requests from business prospects in as timely a manner as possible. Frequently, the Chamber facilitates negotiations concerning road or rail access, utilities, and incentive packages for particular sites or companies.

Local governments in the County play an important part in economic development, oftentimes with regard to utilities such as water and sewer. The City-County Association of Alamance County, which the Chamber helped get started, serves a useful purpose in maintaining open lines of communication and understanding among the various towns plus the County.

The Piedmont Triad Partnership²²

In addition to economic development efforts at the local level, the State of North Carolina has set up an organizational structure for economic development that allows all 100 counties to participate in such activities at the regional level. For this purpose, North Carolina is divided into seven economic development partnerships, each charged with enhancing the economy of their particular region. Alamance County is one of the 12 members of the Piedmont Triad Partnership. The other 11 counties included in the Partnership are Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph,

²² Information on the Piedmont Triad Partnership came from the Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce website.

Rockingham, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin counties. This partnership was formed as a non-profit organization in 1991.

Responsibilities of the Partnership include external marketing, public and media relations, market and project research, and technology development, including the maintenance of an effective website. Marketing duties include sales trips and communications with site selection consultants, international missions, and participation with the North Carolina Department of Commerce on domestic and international marketing events. The Partnership may also help coordinate special events for consultants, clients and Department of Commerce developers.

The Economic Development arm of the Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce is an active member of the Partnership and is often a part of the Partnership delegation when it makes trips to promote the area. By playing a visible role, Alamance County keeps its name in front of developers and businesses looking to expand or relocate.

At present, the Partnership is working to bring Federal Express to Guilford County. If FedEx locates in Greensboro, economic developers believe there will be significant positive trickle down effects for Alamance County.

Incentive Packages for Industry

North Carolina enabling legislation encourages the use of so-called “incentive packages” as an additional enticement for new and expanding industries. Incentive packages may include training opportunities for new employees, the provision of infrastructure improvements, financial breaks related to taxes, or any number of other creative incentives. The specific structure of such packages often varies from deal to deal.

With regard to financial incentives generally, a new or expanding industry must satisfy certain minimum requirements to be eligible. These requirements include wage rates above the average for the area and the creation of a certain minimum number of jobs. An industry committed to a \$10 million investment and 25 new good paying jobs, for example, could be eligible for a financial incentive package of 1% of the investment or \$100,000.

Incentives Are Influenced by Tier Assignments²³

The size of various incentive packages is also governed by the economic conditions in the county being considered for new investment. In North Carolina, the General assembly passed the William S. Lee Act, requiring that the NC Department of Commerce develop a “tier” system that determines the size and type of economic development opportunities available to a particular county. The system assigns every county in the state to a tier from 1 to 5, with tier 1 counties being the most economically distressed and tier 5 counties being the most economically well off. Tier assignments are reviewed annually, based on population growth, the unemployment rate and per capita income. The intent of the system is to make less prosperous counties better able to compete with more prosperous counties for business investment by allowing for larger incentive packages in poorer areas.

Alamance County is a Tier 5 county. In Tier 5, businesses relocating or expanding here receive a \$500 tax credit per new job created, and a seven per cent investment tax credit for machinery and equipment investments over \$1 million. By comparison, businesses choosing to locate in a Tier 1 county (e.g. Halifax County) would qualify for \$12,500 tax credit per new job created, and the same seven per cent tax credit on any new machinery and equipment. Because the overall the economic health of Alamance County has been judged to be greater than many other counties in the state, there is less economic help available from the State. At times, however, Alamance County has negotiated special incentive packages in addition to Tier 5 incentives for qualified businesses that the County wishes to locate in our area.

²³ This information is taken from a summary provided in the most recent newsletter of the Alamance County Area Chamber of Commerce.

A Shifting Economy-- But With Continued Reliance Upon Manufacturing

Over the past several decades, the U.S. economy has been experiencing a steady shift away from *traditional industrial* and *agricultural* sectors and toward *information age* and *service sector* industries. During the past two decades in particular, the economy of Alamance County has shifted from near total reliance upon the traditional textile industry to a more diversified industrial and service base. Today, in addition to hosiery and textile plants, Alamance County has over 300 diversified manufacturers including electronics, molded plastics, automotive components, life science educational supplies, riding and power lawn mowers, control valves, regulators and electric motors, and cigarette filters, to name a few.

Manufacturing, in general, has declined as a percentage of total employment in the county. According to statistics compiled by the NC Department of Commerce and the US Census, manufacturing jobs made up over 40% of total county employment as recently as 1994. Just five years later, in 1999, manufacturing jobs had dropped to less than 30% of total employment. 2001 showed more of the same trend with several manufacturers in Alamance County laying off workers or closing entirely. (These manufacturers included Glen Raven, Inc., R.L. Stowe Mills, Ametek and SCI.). The latest statistics for 2001, which do not take into account these job losses, showed manufacturing employment in Alamance County at just over 28%. Even so, this compares with a statewide average of only about 20%. This means that, despite significant declines in manufacturing, the Alamance County economy remains heavily dependent upon industry relative to most other counties in the state. This also means that Alamance County is more susceptible to cyclical changes in the national economy-- when the national economy is good, things are usually better than good in Alamance County. When the national economy is bad, the Alamance County economy is worse.²⁴

Meanwhile, during this period of decline in manufacturing, service industry employment in Alamance grew from under 24% in 1994 to over 26% by 2001. Prominent service industries in the county include laboratory and testing services, medical care and research, higher education, entertainment, recreation and dining. Finally, two other economic sectors showing substantial gains during this period included (1) transportation, communication and utilities, and (2) construction.

On Nov. 15, 2001, Burlington Industries Inc., once the largest textile company in the world, filed for reorganization under Section 11. Burlington Industries has since begun a comprehensive reorganization, involving the closure of five plants and the elimination of thousands of jobs. Despite the implications of this reorganization—for the American textile industry, and for Alamance County in particular, many economic developers see this as a blessing in disguise. As will be seen later in this policy section, Alamance County has most of the right ingredients in place to emerge from this near term loss to be stronger than ever.

Travel and Tourism²⁵

According to statistics compiled by the Division of Tourism within the NC Department of Commerce, travel and tourism expenditures in Alamance County rose from \$77.6 million in 1995 to \$106.9 million in 2001. More than 1,360 jobs, with a total payroll of \$22.03 million, were directly attributable to travel and tourism that same year. This placed Alamance County 22nd among all 100 counties in the state.

Locally, the Burlington and Alamance Convention and Visitor Bureau, housed in the Chamber of Commerce, is charged with responsibility for promoting travel and tourism in the area. The activities of the Bureau are funded by a hotel occupancy tax. In fiscal year 1993-94, the occupancy tax generated \$262 thousand. By fiscal year 2000-2001 total tax receipts had risen to \$502 thousand. By agreement, two thirds of the tax money goes to the Tourism Development Authority, one third goes to the County. These monies are distributed after 3% of the total is removed and set aside to defray the costs of administering the tax program.

²⁴ This pattern can be seen by comparing unemployment rates in Alamance County with those of the state and nation during economic cycles.

²⁵ Note: Much of this information for this section was provided by Kelly May, Vice President, Burlington and Alamance Convention and Visitor Bureau.

While post-“9/11” tax receipts are showing some declines from the most recent figures, the long-term trend appears to be for continued growth. This can be evidenced, to some degree, in the on-going construction of additional hotel rooms in the County. To illustrate, before 1997, there were 13 hotel properties and one bed and breakfast in Alamance County, offering a total room count of 1,198. By 2001, there were 21 hotel properties plus 5 bed and breakfasts offering a total of 1732 rooms. By the end of 2002, there will be 2 more hotel properties adding 91 more rooms to the total.

By far, most of these hotel accommodations are located along the Interstate 40/85 corridor. As a result of the wealth of accommodations within this corridor, Alamance County has emerged as an important travel service area for interstate highway travel in the central piedmont North Carolina. In addition to accommodations, numerous restaurants, gasoline stations, and retail outlets benefit from the heavy volume of travelers on I-40/85 seeking services.

Historic Preservation Interests and Heritage Tourism

As noted elsewhere in this plan, historic preservation can also be a significant part of a community’s economic development strategy, particularly as it applies to tourism interests. *Heritage tourism*, in particular, seeks to capitalize upon the history and authentic culture of the area, rather than artificially created tourism *attractions*. In keeping with this initiative, recent preservation initiatives have the potential to build a solid reputation for the area as a heritage tourism experience, particularly as related to the history and culture of the textile industry. In addition to enhancing heritage tourism resources, this strategy will require the development of a variety of retail establishments, restaurants, accommodations, and amenities offering services at many different prices. It will also require that care and attention be given to the county’s quality of development, roadway and community appearances, and overall image.

The Haw River Trail and Tourism

The Haw River Trail offers 35 uninterrupted miles of flat water canoeing through the heart of Alamance County. The trail can be accessed at six different points. Admission is free except perhaps, for the cost of renting or buying a canoe. The full recreational and economic potential of the Haw River Trail is far from being realized at this time. Even so, if the trail should gain popularity for boaters outside the county, such visitors may stay in area hotels, and buy food and other provisions at area stores. While the exact amount of such expenditures would be difficult to project, (and would pale in comparison to the dollar volume in interstate travel services) their contribution to the area economy is another opportunity for diversification.

Alamance County As A Bedroom Community

At the same time that Alamance County has undergone a shift away from traditional industries, the county’s neighbors to the west and east, the Piedmont Triad and the Research Triangle, respectively, have witnessed even more dramatic shifts in their economies toward services, information technology, and other less “traditional” industries. As a result, many of Alamance County’s workers increasingly travel to higher paying jobs in these areas, while choosing to reside in “low tax rate” Alamance County. One recent news article stated: *“Alamance County’s proximity to Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill allows commuters who live in Alamance to jump on the highway and be at work in the Triangle in under 30 minutes.”*

Generally, being a bedroom community does not bode well for the County’s balance sheet, in terms of property tax base generated versus cost of services provided. Residential development, as a rule, is a financial drain on the balance sheet of county government; commercial and industrial development, on the other hand, bring more revenue to the county than they usually require in the cost of local government services. For now, it does appear that parts of Alamance County are becoming a bedroom community for people who work (and probably do much of their shopping) outside the county. If current growth trends and policies remain the same, this will likely have economic and fiscal consequences over time. (Also see Policy Section 11: Paying for Infrastructure and Services).

New Industry Coming In Versus Expansion of Existing Industry

While new business growth is often taken to mean new businesses or industries moving into the county from outside the area, it is important to recognize that new business growth can also mean expansions and spin-offs of existing businesses, as well as new business start-ups. New business growth from within the county should therefore receive equal consideration when awarding economic development incentives for creating new jobs.

The Particular Advantages of Alamance County

The following are some of the competitive advantages of Alamance County for economic development:

- (1) Potable Water Supplies. The City of Burlington has about one-fifth the number of residents as Greensboro, but it controls three reservoirs with a combined 12 billion gallons of water - almost twice as much as Greensboro. In addition, the cities of Graham and Mebane jointly treat and distribute water from Quaker Lake, which holds several billion additional gallons of water.
- (2) Location. Alamance County is located between the Piedmont Triad on the west, and the Research Triangle on the east. Given regional growth projections for the next two decades, the county is positioned to play a much greater role in the economies of these two great urban areas.
- (3) Interstate Access. Alamance County straddles Interstates 40 and 85 in the heart of the Piedmont crescent of North Carolina. The recent widening of this artery from four to eight lanes has greatly increased its capacity to accommodate regional commerce.
- (4) Rail. Alamance County has always been well served by rail facilities. It was recently announced that the designated corridor for the planned High Speed Rail Service between Washington, DC and Atlanta includes a section through the midst of Alamance County. If this high-speed rail should come to fruition, the service would likely include a stop serving the Burlington area.
- (5) Airports. Alamance County is well positioned between two major commercial air facilities- RDU Airport in the Research Triangle and Greensboro Airport in the Triad. In addition, Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport provides for air access to the county by corporate jets, including Boeing 737's. The airport recently installed a new instrument landing system (ILS). Since "9-11" the convenience and usefulness of BARA appears to have grown in importance relative to the larger airports.
- (6) Lower taxes. Property taxes have consistently been among the lowest in the state and are generally lower than surrounding counties.
- (7) Available, Motivated Work Force. With declines in the textile industry over the past five years in particular, there exists a motivated, and experienced work force capable of moving in to new jobs as they are created.
- (8) Affordable wage rates. While lower pay scales are not desired by the individual worker, they can be a significant draw to new industry.
- (9) Low Union Activity. This is also a draw to new industry, particularly when compared to union activity in other regions of the country.
- (10) Institutions of Higher Learning: Alamance County Community College fulfills a vital role in educating and training workers for the needs of area business and industry. Elon University has grown in size, in beauty, and in stature within the academic world. It has become a mini-industry unto itself, not only producing national caliber graduates in a variety of business and other programs, but also contributing significantly to the economy of the area.
- (11) Low crime rate. Alamance County's crime rate is significantly lower than the state average. People like to live where they feel secure.
- (12) Hospital Care: the recent consolidation of area hospitals into one main hospital, Alamance Regional Medical Center, has brought a new level of hospital care to the service of the community.
- (13) Solid Waste Disposal: Alamance County has a high-tech lined Sub Title D landfill that opened in 1993. The landfill has a projected remaining life span of about 40 years. Tipping fees are the lowest in the region.

Suggested Changes to Improve the Climate for Economic Development

Even with the many advantages listed above, a balanced assessment of forces working for and against economic development raises certain other key issues. In positioning Alamance County for future economic development, several changes have been identified as being important to improve the climate for economic development. These changes include: (1) continued improvements in the Alamance-Burlington School System. (2) the extension of land use and zoning controls over a larger part of the county and (3) stronger inter-local cooperation on transportation, water and sewer improvements.

- ***Continue to Improve the Alamance-Burlington School System and Alamance Community College***

Increasingly, the quality of an area's schools has become a major factor in corporate location decisions. The Chamber of Commerce routinely fields questions concerning test scores and other measures of educational quality in Alamance County. The 1996 consolidation of Burlington City Schools and Alamance County Schools set the stage for significant improvements in the combined system over the long term. As a result of this action, and the sustained effort of school administrators, parents and teachers, good progress has been made. Yet, despite these efforts, the County school system has difficulty recruiting and keeping good teachers. Many observers point to the low teacher salary supplement offered by the County (relative to surrounding school systems) as a primary factor contributing to the problem. This plan can only urge those involved in the school system to work even harder, for businesses to get more involved, for parents to motivate their children, and for the County to provide the funding commensurate with this priority. To bring high quality, higher paying business and industry to Alamance County, it is paramount that the County has a high quality school system.

Similarly, on-going efforts to improve both the physical environment and program offerings at Alamance Community College are seen as critical to sustaining the area's ability to produce a steady stream of qualified workers. More than ever, prospective industries—particularly those that pay higher wages—look to the quality of the local labor force, as a primary factor in location decisions.

- ***Extend Zoning to the Unincorporated Area of Alamance County***

Zoning in Alamance County is confined primarily to municipalities and their extraterritorial jurisdictions. The County is also bordered on the north and south by counties that have partial zoning and on the east and west by counties that have zoning over their entire jurisdiction.

Most people think that zoning is about controlling the use of land so that a community develops according to a plan rather than by a series of unrelated decisions. The debate usually creates two sides. One side believes that property rights should not be restricted by a collective vision of the community. The other side believes that what's best for the community should come ahead of individual interests. What is often lost in the debate is the influence of zoning on economic development.

A recent survey conducted by the Alamance Chamber of Commerce showed that 84 percent of businesses that responded favored some sort of zoning for the county. Zoning can influence what types of industry come to the community and where it is located. For example, some undesirable types of businesses that are controlled by zoning standards in one area, may locate by default in a nearby area where there is no zoning. This can be witnessed, for example, when a waste incinerator, junkyard, landfill, asphalt plant, or strip club locates in an unzoned area just outside a municipality that has zoning.

Zoning can also have other less obvious impacts on corporate location decisions. Zoning can be effective in preventing the "uglification" of major roadways by unplanned strip commercial development and a proliferation of billboards. Zoning can require a better caliber of business signage and better landscaping of parking lots adjoining the highway. Thus, the appearance of

major roadways can create a critical first impression on company executives thinking about moving to an area.

- **Strengthen Inter-Local Cooperation on Transportation, Water and Sewer Improvements**

An adequate system of infrastructure is vital in the expansion of existing industry and the recruitment of new industry to an area. It has already been noted that Alamance County, through its municipalities, is in a strong position with regard to water and sewer utilities. Surplus capacity in the water system of the City of Burlington, for example, is sparking a new wave of development in eastern Guilford County, where Burlington water has recently been made available. Similarly, excess capacities in area wastewater treatment plants (due, in part, to textile mill closings) places the community in a strong position to recruit new industry in need of wastewater treatment services.

To their credit, local governments in Alamance County periodically come together under the banner of the "City-County Association" to discuss matters of common concern and interest. All eligible local governments in the county also participate in coordinated transportation planning for the area through the Burlington-Graham Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (the MPO).

From an economic development standpoint, it is critical that all local governments speak with one voice when it comes to infrastructure improvements. While excellent strides have been made in this regard, there is always room for improvement. It is vital, for example, that priorities for area transportation improvements have 100% endorsement by all local governments in the MPO; there must not be any reason for the NC Department of Transportation to delay a transportation project due to perceived conflicts among local governments. With regard to utilities, some municipalities in North Carolina have standing working agreements with their adjoining jurisdictions as to how they will handle the extensions of water and sewer lines. These agreements list the conditions upon which lines will be extended and often provide for cost sharing arrangements and matching grants when projects of special economic interest are involved.

Pro-Business Attitude, With Concern for Quality of Life

Alamance County is generally pro-business, with a balanced concern for quality of life issues. This means that while there is general agreement that Alamance County could benefit from industries and businesses offering higher paying jobs, there is not *blind* support for having growth simply for growth's sake. Rather, growth is favored when it enhances economic opportunity and the quality of life, especially for existing residents. Specifically, new growth is favored when it (1) is compatible with the long-term quality of the area's existing natural resources, and (2) seeks to capitalize upon existing physical and human resources in the county. New businesses and industries that draw upon the existing labor force, or which would require area workers to train and upgrade their skills, are especially desired.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy 14.1: New and expanding industries and businesses should be encouraged that: 1) diversify the local economy, 2) train and utilize a more highly skilled labor force and 3) increase per capita income.

Policy 14.2: The County endorses a pro-business/pro-growth attitude, balanced by concern for a high quality of life, community image, and natural environment.

Policy 14.3: Capital expenditures for the purpose of economic development shall be targeted toward areas that are logically developable. Targeted areas should include raw land as well as the revitalization and reuse of currently unused or underutilized structures, sites and infrastructure.

Policy 14.4: The continued growth of the area's tourism industry shall be supported through (1) expansion of traditional travel and tourism facilities, and (2) a focus on the historic, cultural and natural features of the County including, for example, the Haw River corridor.

Policy 14.5: The County should promote coordination of economic development resources among various local institutional agencies and seek regional cooperation and interaction among areas with shared economic interests.

Policy 14.6: In addition to the recruitment and expansion of major new industry, the value of small business start-ups, expansions and spin-offs shall also be recognized.

Policy Section 15: Public Safety²⁶

This Section on public safety services in Alamance County includes discussion and analysis of:

- **Sheriff's Department**
- **Volunteer Fire Departments**
- **Emergency Management and Fire Marshal's Office**
- **Emergency Medical and Ambulance Service**
- **Central Communications**

Sheriff's Department

The Alamance County Sheriff's Department is faced with the challenge of meeting growing demands for service in the face of constraining budget limitations. This challenge is seen in several current issues facing the Department.

Personnel

The Sheriffs Department has 76 sworn positions, of which 3 are presently vacant and frozen. These sworn officers are supported by 52 non-sworn positions. The sworn officer break down is as follows:

3	Administration: Sheriff, 2 Majors
3	School Resource Officers
1	DARE Officer
1	Detention Jailer
1	Telecommunicator
10	Court Bailiffs
57	Vice, Detention, Animal Control, Patrol

By most measures, the Sheriffs Department is understaffed in terms of both sworn officers and clerical assistance. (For a local comparison, the City of Burlington has 108 sworn officers.) A comparative staffing survey was recently conducted of sheriff's departments in three other counties similar in size to Alamance. The survey revealed that these counties averaged 25 to 35 more officers than Alamance County. These numbers, as well as the Department's growing workload, indicate a need for at least 20 additional sworn officers over the next 5 years.

²⁶ Much of the information for this section was obtained through personal and telephone interviews with the following members of the Alamance County Public Safety Division: Sheriff Gary Massey, Sheriff's Department, John Breitmeier, Emergency Medical and Ambulance Service, Benny Brooks, Central Communications, Fire Marshal Drew Sharpe and Jerry Beckom, Emergency Management Services.

Compensation

The Alamance County Sheriffs Department does not have sufficient funding to pay its deputies wages that are fully competitive with other law enforcement agencies. As a result, the Department serves as somewhat of a training ground for young officers. These officers then move on to higher paying positions in other jurisdictions as soon as their experience allows. Most deputies have outside jobs to supplement their income.

Increased Non-Patrol Duties Take Officers Off the Street

Sheriff's deputies are increasingly called upon to conduct tasks that take them away from more direct law enforcement duties. Examples follow.

- Registration of Offenders. In recent years, the General Assembly passed legislation requiring that convicted sex offenders and perpetrators of domestic violence be required to register in the county of their residence. For sex offenders, the county used to have to maintain records for 10 years—that requirement is now for the life of the offender.
- Registration of Video Poker Machines. The registration and tracking of video poker machines is another responsibility given to the Sheriff's Department by the General Assembly—a task generally acknowledged to be difficult to impossible to adequately administer.
- Out of County Transportation. Deputies must frequently transport prisoners or documents to facilities outside the county. This type of activity may take an officer away from patrol duty for an entire shift.

Officer Shortages Combined with No Overtime/No Part-Time Help Leads to Sparse Patrols

The patrol system for Alamance County is based on five patrol areas—three in the north and two in the south. Under a full staffing situation, there are 8 officers per twelve-hour shift. This arrangement allows for one officer per patrol area, plus one corporal assigned to the north areas, and one corporal assigned to the south areas. If available, the 8th officer is usually working in the Department headquarters or assisting with incidents where needed.

In 2001, Alamance County sheriff's officers accumulated some 3000 hours of overtime, but because the County does not provide compensation for overtime, these hours had to be taken in compensatory time. When this many compensatory hours are added to normal vacation and sick time, there are not enough man-hours left to meet the shift requirements outlined above. As a result, it is not unusual for some patrol areas to be left without an assigned officer for an entire shift. At such times, one officer must cover two patrol areas, or senior officers must be pulled from their regular duties to do patrol work. In addition, the patrol shortage can be even worse if an officer must go out of the county to transport prisoners or documents.

Growing Latino Population

As noted in the Cultural Diversity and Acceptance Section of this plan, the Latino population has been the fastest growing ethnic/cultural group in Alamance County. The cultural differences of this population group pose particular challenges for law enforcement. Foremost among these challenges is the inherent distrust among Latinos of law enforcement agencies and personnel generally. As a result, the Latino community typically will not cooperate on investigations. This is unfortunate because of the disproportionately high crime rate endured by the Latino community. Latinos experience a higher than average number of assaults, robberies and various scams. The Sheriffs Department is attempting to work through churches to break down the distrust.

Used Versus New Vehicles

Limited funding for the Sheriff's Office is also apparent in its purchasing arrangements for used vehicles. Alamance County Sheriff's patrol cars, for example, are typically used cars from the State Highway Patrol. They usually have 65,000 to 70,000 miles on them when purchased by the Department. Then, at 150,000 to 160,000 miles, they are turned over to the Department of Social Services or the Health Department for additional duty.

During the interviews conducted for this policy section, it was suggested that the purchase or lease of new vehicles might be explored as a better alternative to the purchase of used highway patrol cars. Arguments in favor of obtaining new vehicles include: (1) Favorable vehicle prices are available under State purchasing contracts, (2) Low cost lease agreements can be arranged with automobile manufacturers. (3) Maintenance and parts replacement costs could be substantially less with newer vehicles. (4) Fuel economy would clearly be better for newer, smaller, more fuel efficient cars, when compared to the large powerful engines with which highway patrol cars are equipped, and (5) County workers would be able to spend more time in productive work rather than in shuttling vehicles in need of frequent repair to auto service shops. Arguments in favor of continuing the present arrangement include: (1) Lower initial purchase prices for the used cars and (2) Lower initial insurance premiums for used cars. Regardless of which approach is taken, both options should be evaluated in terms of the total costs and benefits to the County.

Communications Equipment

The communications equipment used by the Sheriffs Department is VHF based. This older generation equipment has been phased out, or is being phased out by many public safety organizations. Many are going to systems based on "800 trunking" or comparable. The principal advantage of 800 trunking is that it provides for more channels and more frequencies than VHF. It also allows for the addition of data terminals, allowing public safety personnel to access and download, up to the minute information (e.g. mug shots, finger prints, vehicle registration) from remote data banks. Perhaps more significantly, having an 800-trunking capability provides for better inter-agency communication, such as with the City of Burlington.²⁷

The Future: Sheriff's Department Substations?

Occasionally, the subject of establishing two or more satellite offices or substations of the Sheriff's Department comes up. Such satellite offices could be housed in permanent structures or could be located in self-contained mobile units-- allowing them to be repositioned in trouble spots as conditions require. Reasons offered in support of substations include: (1) the large geographic territory served by the Sheriff's Department, which is further exacerbated by sprawling development patterns (2) the fact that the unincorporated county is divided into two distinct areas, north and south of the central urban area corridor and (3) the belief that substations might improve response time to emergency calls. Arguments against substations include: (1) the additional cost of establishing and maintaining such facilities and (2) inadequate staff to man the facilities, meaning that, with current personnel levels, they would be empty most of the time. Looking ahead, if the number of sworn officers and support staff in the Sheriff's department are eventually increased, it might be appropriate to further explore this option. So long as staffing remains at current levels, however, there is little need to do so.

Volunteer Fire Departments

Alamance County relies upon a system of individual fire departments, staffed mostly by volunteers, to provide for fire protection and first response assistance in those parts of the county not covered by a municipal fire department. Currently, there are 12 departments, each with their own local fire district commission, operating out of 18 stations. Four of the fire districts are operated by municipal

²⁷ A feasibility study conducted some five years ago estimated that a new 800 trunking based communications system serving the whole county and all of its public safety agencies would cost from \$7 to \$9 million. When the County decided that the cost was too much, the City of Burlington went forward alone and installed its own 800 trunking system at a reported cost of approximately \$3 million.

governments. Manpower comes from roughly 450 volunteers and about 25 paid personnel. The Emergency Management Coordinator for the County maintains a resource list and directory of personnel and equipment available to each department. While this information was once readily available to the public, it was recently removed from the County's website due to heightened security concerns following 9-11.

Substantial funding for the various fire departments comes from a special fire district tax that is added to the County property tax. Each of the 12 districts sets its own property tax rate, which must be approved by the County Commissioners as part of the County budget. Fire district taxes for each department range from 5 cents to 10.5 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. Most are about 8 to 9 cents per \$100. For fiscal year 2002-2003, these fire district tax rates will generate about \$2.8 million, up from \$2.5 million during 2001-2002. Fire district taxes are not part of the general revenue fund, but rather go into a designated fire district fund specifically for that use.

With 18 stations located around the county, these fire departments also provide for "first response" concerning emergency medical, rescue and disaster assistance. Fire personnel strive to be on the scene of an emergency anywhere in the county in about 4 minutes.

Declining Volunteerism

Perhaps the biggest concern facing all of the fire departments in Alamance County is the noticeable decline in the number of people stepping forward for the volunteer fire service. A combination of factors may be responsible for declining volunteerism, including families with both spouses working, hectic lifestyles, commitments to organized children's activities, and the loss of a *sense of community* that often occurs during periods of rapid population growth. There are apparently no easy answers to solving this problem.

A problem closely related to declines in the *number* of volunteers is finding volunteers who can respond to *daytime* fires. While mutual aid arrangements with nearby departments are usually able to fill the void, this may not be the case in the future if volunteer numbers continue to dwindle. Of course, fire insurance ratings for county property owners are related, in part, to manpower levels available at fires.

Recent Upgrade in Communications

Just as with the Sheriff's Office, the communications system that the various fire departments have been using to coordinate their emergency functions has been in need of upgrading. Recently, this equipment was upgraded by installing six new VHF based receivers around the county. These receivers improve the strength of the signal, providing for greater voice clarity. The receivers also allow for portable radio coverage between emergency personnel. While the Burlington City Fire Department recently switched their primary communications to an 800-trunking system, they also retained VHF equipment on their trucks. This dual system enables the volunteer fire departments to communicate with Burlington firefighters.

Emergency Management and Fire Marshal's Office

Alamance County's Emergency Management and Fire Marshal's Office²⁸ is the department set up to assist the citizens of Alamance County in awareness of, preparation for, survival of, and recovery from disasters, both natural (hurricanes, tornadoes, etc) and man-made (plane crashes, nuclear meltdowns, fires, etc.).

Emergency Management Planning

Emergency Management is responsible for preparing and updating a number of emergency management related plans including:

²⁸The Alamance County Fire Marshal also serves as the director of Emergency Management.

- County Multi-Hazard Plan
—overall plan covering natural disasters, hurricanes, tornados
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
—focuses on things that can be done now to minimize damage to life and property from future hazardous events
- Weapons of Mass Destruction Plan
—includes plans to deal with bio-terrorism and anthrax
- Airport Emergency Response Plan
—this plan needs to be updated given the increased runway length, different types of aircraft now using the airport, additional hangars that have been built, etc.
- Foot and Mouth Plan
—developed in conjunction with the County Agriculture Department, this plan is designed to prevent, and if necessary minimize, the spread of this highly contagious and economically devastating disease of cattle and swine.

Growing Urbanism of the County Raises New Concerns

When Alamance County was largely rural in character, natural hazards such as floods, tornados, snow storms and power outages posed fewer problems than today. Damage was limited because population densities were sparse and assets were spread out. Today, however, (and particularly looking toward the future) given the rapidly growing population of the unincorporated area, there have been marked increases in the exposure and level of risk to citizens and their property. One of the biggest concerns, currently, is the designation and planning of evacuation shelters to house citizens displaced by major storm events. This promises to be an issue of focus for the department in the near future.

Multi-Year Drought

Though not often thought of as a responsibility of emergency management, the drought of the past four years, affecting so much of the piedmont area of North Carolina, has brought contingency planning for water supplies to the forefront. Rural area farmers, in particular, who have no access to municipal water supplies, have found their groundwater resources drying up. While Emergency Management has no ability to provide water per se, the office can be instrumental in identifying emergency haulers and tankers, should water have to be trucked in, for example.

Fire Safety Inspections by the Fire Marshal's Office

State law sets forth the minimum requirements and frequency of inspections for non-single family, non-farm structures. Frequency of inspection can vary from 1 to 3 years, depending on the type of structure. Beyond the requirements of state law, Alamance County has established its own goal of inspecting every required structure in the county at least once per year. The Alamance County Fire Marshal employs 3 fire inspectors to perform this function. Inspectors have their own area of specialization.²⁹

Compensatory Time Cuts Into Time Available to Perform Regular Duties

Like the Sheriff's Department, employees in the office of the Fire Marshal are not permitted to incur overtime wages. Therefore, extra time spent beyond regular duty hours must be accumulated as compensatory time. For example, fire inspectors are frequently on call for HAZMAT (monitoring of hazardous materials transport/disposal). At least one fire inspector must also be present at each and every fire in the county. Involvement in these extra duties, therefore, cuts into the regular hours of the employees to perform their other tasks.

²⁹ For example, the fire inspector interviewed for this policy Section had a specialization in chemical planning.

Emergency Medical and Ambulance Service (EMS)

Alamance County's Emergency Medical and Ambulance Service provides emergency medical treatment, and both emergency and non-emergency ambulance service throughout Alamance County. EMS is headquartered in the county seat in Graham.

Personnel

Alamance County Emergency Medical Services has 76 full-time employees and 25-30 part-time employees. Reportedly, there is a current shortage of paramedics nationally. In this employment environment, Alamance County must compete with surrounding areas for the services of paramedics. Fortunately, Alamance County offers a work schedule that many paramedics find attractive. While many EMS departments require their paramedics to work 24 hours in every 48 hours, Alamance County requires 24 hours of work for each 72 hours. This enables most of the County's paramedics to hold down a second job or have their own business. So while the overall pay in surrounding counties may be higher on an annual basis, some paramedics find the schedule and hourly rate in Alamance County to their liking.

Equipment

Alamance County EMS operates 13 ambulances and 3 medic trucks, distributed as follows:

3 ambulances	main station (Graham)
2 convalescent units (non-emerg)	main station (Graham)
4 back up units (reserve/ repairs)	main station (Graham)
3 ambulances	west substation (W. Burlington)
1 ambulance	northeast substation (E. Burlington)
13 total	
1 medic truck	east central (Mebane area)
1 medic truck	northwest (Altamahaw/Ossipee area)
1 medic truck	south central (Mt. Herman area)
3 total	

Unfortunately, many of the County's ambulances are older than desirable and have excessive mileage. The current price for an ambulance is \$98,000 while the cost of a new medic truck, purchased under state contract, is \$33,000. The medic trucks, which are typically modified *Suburbans* or *Excursions*, are positioned so as to be closer to more rural areas. These four-wheel drive vehicles can reach less accessible areas, such as when a hunter becomes injured in a location off the road.

Demand for Services

In general, the demand for emergency medical and ambulance services has increased steadily as the population of the county has grown. Interestingly, recent call volume, however, has *declined* by about 30 to 50 calls per month. The decline is believed to be attributable to the County's recent change in policy concerning transportation charges for nursing home residents. As a result, nursing home facilities are now making a greater effort to transport their patients using their own vehicles.

Growing Elderly Population

As noted in the Section on Services to Senior Citizens, the elderly population of the United States and that of Alamance County in particular, have been growing at an accelerating rate. This growth in the senior citizen population is expected to explode over the next two decades as the enormous post-war baby boom generation enters its retirement years. Such increases in the number of elderly citizens will have a significant impact on the services provided by the County's Emergency Medical Services. Call and service volumes for ambulance transportation will grow commensurately.

Medicare/Medicaid Issues

Alamance County's Emergency Medical Services unit obtains about 52 to 55% of their total revenue from Medicare reimbursements and another 5 to 8% from Medicaid reimbursements. With a combined 60% of EMS revenues from these two programs, their impact on EMS funding levels is substantial. In recent years, reimbursements from these programs have not kept up with increases in the costs of providing services.³⁰

In addition, many residents are surprised to learn that if they can (1) stand with assistance and (2) sit upright, ambulance transportation is not a covered Medicare service—i.e. Medicare policy holds that they should be able to arrange for their own transportation in a private vehicle. This common misunderstanding by the public frequently causes problems for the EMS department, as EMS personnel must explain to county residents what types of services are covered and what types are not.

Other Issues

Other emerging issues, likely to have a significant impact on EMS over the next several years, include:

- *Training Costs:* With the advent of terrorism, chemical spills, fire safety, and transport of hazardous materials, the need for up to date training has grown substantially. In the past, such training has been conducted during normal shift hours. More recently, efforts to conduct such training have been stymied by frequent interruptions and service calls. In the future, it may be necessary to set aside specific hours for training. As service personnel are removed from regular duty to participate in training, there will be resulting increases in staff hours and personnel costs.
- *Drug Costs:* With each passing year, EMS paramedics are authorized to employ a wider range of drugs for emergency situations. As newer drugs become available for use, (e.g. for cardiac and stroke patients) the costs of such drugs tend to go up commensurately.
- *Equipment Costs:* Alamance EMS is now doing 12-Lead EKG's on cardiac patients in the field. This is but one piece of equipment that other EMS departments have been using for years, but that Alamance County has only just recently begun using. In the future, the County's EMS will need to be more proactive if it is to keep pace with service standards in the industry.
- *Vehicle Costs:* Capital outlays for new emergency vehicles, the backbone of EMS and Ambulance services, will continue to increase. More sophisticated equipment on each new vehicle also drives the cost upward.

Central Communications

Alamance County Central Communications is located in the basement of the County Office Building on W. Elm Street in Graham. The communications center receives calls and handles dispatches for all 12 fire departments in the county (does not include Burlington), all emergency medical and rescue calls, and the police departments of Graham, Haw River, Elon, and the Elon University Police.

Staffing

The communications center is staffed by 14 telecommunicators working 12-hour shifts, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. Normally, there are 3 telecommunicators per shift, each working four 12-hour shifts for a total of 48 hours. This arrangement provides for a sufficient number of total hours per year to allow for vacations, holidays, sick leave, training, etc. Working in support of the telecommunicators are 3 other staff persons: the e-911 coordinator, the communications supervisor and the department director.

³⁰ For example, the County charges \$175 plus \$5.50 per loaded mile for a non-emergency transport. While Medicare reimbursements match the per loaded mile charge, Medicare pays only \$60 to \$70 dollars of the flat charge. Other base charges, exclusive of per loaded mile charges, range from \$100 for emergency treatment with no transport involved, up to \$400 for emergency services and transport involving multiple life support services.

Compensation Issues

As noted above, telecommunicators normally work 48 hours per work period. Of those hours, 40 are compensated at regular pay, while the remaining 8 are paid at half the normal wage. Reportedly, this situation may be at odds with the Fair Labor Standards Act. In addition, the present pay structure requires the hiring of part-time personnel at a higher wage than the regular employees. Reportedly, if the department’s telecommunicators were paid at time and a half for any hours over 40, this would eliminate the need to pay these employees for training, and save money overall.

Call Volume Versus Personnel

As with most County services, staffing levels in Central Communications have not kept pace with increases in the demand for service. Demand for service is most easily measured by the volume of calls coming in to the Communications Center. The table below shows personnel levels over the past several years relative to the number of calls received.

Year	Total Personnel	Calls Received
1995	11	Awaiting numbers from Benny Brooks
1999	15	“
2002	17	“

Increases in call volume each year may be attributed to a number of factors, including: (1) growth of the county generally (2) growth within the municipalities served, as well as by areas added through annexation³¹ (3) growth of the county’s elderly population (4) growth of the student population at Elon University and (5) generally higher expectations on the part of the public regarding emergency services.

Communications Equipment

The County’s e-911 system (a Position Lifeline 100) was considered state of the art at the time of its purchase, about three years ago. The computer-based components of the system need to be replaced about every five years to remain up to date. The regular communications equipment used by the department employs UHF/VHF technology and is more than 25 years old. The limitations of this equipment and the movement in the emergency communications field toward 800 trunking systems have already been discussed under the other sections of this Public Safety Section.

POLICIES ON PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Policy 15.1: The County shall seek to retain qualified, experienced personnel through a comprehensive employment plan that includes manageable workloads, competitive wages and benefits, and on-going training.

Policy 15.2: As the area grows, the County may establish strategically located substations for public safety services, provided that sufficient resources can be made available to properly staff and equip them.

Policy 15.3: In procuring vehicles and equipment, the full costs and benefits of various options shall be carefully weighed. Such costs and benefits should include not only the initial purchase price, but also long term operation and maintenance costs, and impact on employee productivity.

³¹ Areas annexed by the three municipalities served removes these residents and businesses from the jurisdiction of the Sheriff’s Department (which handles its own dispatches) and reassigns them to the police department of the annexing municipality (whose dispatches are then handled by the Communications Center).

Policy Section 16: Health Care³²

Access to Health Care is the Number One Issue

The year 2000 Community Health Assessment entitled Healthy Alamance³³ identified four top health care issues for Alamance County: (1) Access to Health Care (2) Child Asthma (3) Child Abuse and (4) Substance Abuse. Of the four, access to health care is perhaps the most universal problem facing the greatest number of persons in the County. It is also the one issue, that if properly addressed, would likely lead to improvements in the treatment of asthma and reductions in the number of incidents of child and substance abuse.

The Healthy Alamance report identified the following “barriers to health care access”, providing updated findings from an earlier (1997) Community Health Assessment. The 2000 report noted:

“Since 1997 there has been much progress made in the community in reducing those barriers, resulting in improved access. This reduction has been the result of a great deal of collaboration among health providers and agencies, both through the facilitation of the Healthy Alamance project and through efforts conducted independent of Healthy Alamance. Nevertheless, the barriers still exist. The 1997 barriers are itemized below, and updated perspectives on those barriers and others are provided.”

The following paragraphs are excerpts from the year 2000 report, with some minor editing to reflect changes since the report was released.

Excerpts from Healthy Alamance

Lack of Adequate Insurance

...An estimated 11,575 Alamance County residents lack insurance on any given day, and that 12,500 privately insured persons are under-insured... Many area job positions are low paying without health benefits. Also, Latinos, who make up an increasingly significant part of the local work force,...do not always enroll in employer-sponsored benefit plans...Since the 1997 report, North Carolina implemented the Health Check/Health Choice insurance program for uninsured children. Through the efforts of the Alamance County Department of Social Services, with the assistance of the Healthy Alamance Access to Healthcare Task Force, the program has exceeded its enrollment goal with the enrollment of over 900 children. The success of the program statewide, however, is challenging the financial resources available to fund it.

High Cost of Medications

The Healthy Alamance Access to Health Care Task Force has identified access to medications for chronic conditions by medically indigent persons as a top priority. Most pharmaceutical firms offer programs that provide free drugs to persons who pass a means test. However, accessing those programs is very time consuming and complicated.... The task force is working with several agencies, including the Charles Drew Center, Alamance ElderCare, the Open Door Clinic, Hospice of Alamance-Caswell, and Alamance Regional Medical Center, to establish a center to coordinate the acquisition and dispensing of medications available through these programs.... Grant funding is being pursued, and the Medical Alliance of the Alamance-Caswell Medical Society has already contributed financial resources towards the center’s development. (Update: Since the 2000 Healthy Alamance Report was issued, ALAMap was formed to help those who are eligible access medications for chronic conditions. Source: Cindy Brady—Coordinator, Healthy Alamance)

³² Much of the background information for this Section was provided during a personal interview with Thomas Ryan, President, Alamance Regional Medical Center, Tim Green Alamance County Health Director, Susan Osborne, Director of Social Services, and Brenda Porter, Elder Care Director.

³³ The Healthy Alamance initiative involves a partnership of four organizations: Alamance Regional Medical Center, Alamance County Health Department, Alamance Caswell Area Mental Health Program, and the Alamance County Department of Social Services.

Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated in 1995 that 9.4 percent of Alamance County's population, or 10,853 persons, was in poverty, as compared to 13.1 percent of the state's population...Alamance County offers a variety of health care services specifically designed to meet the needs of low-income residents. The Charles Drew Center, the Open Door Clinic, and the Alamance County Health Department offer services on a free or a sliding scale basis. The Health Department... has added services for indigent and Latino children. The (new) Charles Drew Center and Open Door Clinic...in east Burlington is near the Health Department, the Department of Social Services, the Alamance-Caswell Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Authority, and other human service agencies...There is a great deal of collaboration among these organizations in the planning and development of services for low-income residents...The statewide Carolina Access program has stimulated physician acceptance of Medicaid...Several new primary care physicians have located their practices in Alamance County...Experience has shown, however, that once new practices fill up, they limit their acceptance of additional Medicaid enrollees.

The Geographic Distribution of Health Care Resources

The 1997 report expressed...the need for more health care delivery in their local communities, especially in Mebane and northern Alamance County...Since the 1997 report there has been much expansion of health care services in Mebane. ARMC established the Mebane Medical Park, where primary and specialty services of the Kernodle Clinic and the Alamance Eye Center are provided, as well as ARMC's rehabilitation and diabetes educational services...The Charles Drew Center and the Open Door Clinic [have relocated] to east Burlington... Also new to that area is the International Family Clinic, which specializes in providing primary care to Latinos...The Scott Clinic opened in Union Ridge in the spring of 2002, serving northern Alamance County... The Snow Camp Family Practice (also known as Jack H. Wolf, MD), affiliated with ARMC, recently opened as a clinic serving the southern area of the county...While neither ARMC nor the Health Department provides mobile services, both conduct outreach activities...Both the Health Department and ARMC work with the major employers conducting health education, wellness, and screening activities...In addition, the task forces of the Healthy Alamance project have provided a variety of screening and educational programs...

Lack of Transportation

...The 1997 report identified the lack of public transportation as a major or top priority issue. As noted, the poor and the elderly are least likely to have independent means of transportation... Because of the high cost and necessary subsidization associated with a public transportation system, local political leaders have been reluctant to endorse the creation of one...The transportation issue is partly addressed in the private sector. The nonprofit Alamance County Transportation System, Inc. provides handicap van service along pre-established routes and by reservations on a fee-for-service basis...ARMC provides courtesy van service for patients needing transportation for rehabilitation and cancer treatment services, and volunteers are solicited for transporting cancer patients... For those citizens who are transitioning from welfare to work, the Alamance County Community Services Agency, in conjunction with the Department of Social Services, offers a wheels-to-work program where donated automobiles are provided on a no cost basis to qualified individuals.... Private taxi service is available in Alamance County.

Lack of Information

(Many) health promotion resources go untapped because people either do not know about them or don't know how to access them...Over the past three years, there has been much activity in promoting awareness of the community's health resources. The Health Department conducted an awareness campaign titled "Everywhere, Everyday, Everybody", which was part of a statewide effort...The Health Department also enjoyed much press coverage regarding new services and... continues to be very visible at community-wide health fairs and in area businesses. The Health Department and ARMC jointly conduct the Alamance Minority Cancer Awareness Program... ARMC

has conducted extensive television and newspaper advertising and has participated in several public service promotional campaigns. A listing of programs and resources...is published in local newspapers... ARMC produces and distributes a magazine, newsletters, and many brochures...The Substance Abuse Task Force (of Healthy Alamance) has produced television and radio shows, produced a theatrical event focusing on eating disorders and substance abuse, and conducted free mental health screening at the Graham Public Library. The Child Abuse Task Force, the Access to Health Care Task Force, and the Child Asthma Coalition all have engaged in promotional activities.

Language and Culture

...The Latino population in Alamance County is exploding...There were 7,600 Latinos in Alamance County in 1998, and 8,733 in 1999. The Alamance-Burlington School System reported that there are approximately 2,000 Latino children enrolled for the 2000-2001 school year. The Latino population is challenging the health system in various ways...In addition to the challenge of managing communication, (cultural) gaps may keep them from seeking care until health needs become urgent problems...Many Driving-While-Intoxicated citations are issued to Latinos, but few Latinos are served by the mental health system for substance abuse. It is common for Latinos to be without vaccinations... The incidence of obesity and diabetes among Latino children also has been a concern...There has been significant activity in addressing the needs of this population... The Centro: La Comunidad...serves in an advocacy role for Latinos, and it coordinates the Alamance County Latino Council, which serves as a forum to address Latino issues. Both the Charles Drew Center and the Health Department have added bilingual staff...ARMC also has conducted (Spanish) classes for its employees...and has had selected printed and video materials produced in Spanish.

Supply of Physicians

The overall supply of physicians in Alamance County has improved over the past several years. However, the ratio of population to physicians is somewhat higher than that of the state...In 1996 the population to physician ratio for Alamance County was 746, which was lower than the 1995 ratio of 791. Similarly, the ratio of population to primary care physician improved from 1926 in 1995 to 1816 in 1998...These ratios are higher than the statewide ratios...The physician supply has further improved since the most recent... data was released...The number of physicians practicing full time in Alamance County who are credentialed by ARMC as of August 2000 reveals a total of 170 physicians and 74 primary care physicians. During 1999 and 2000 alone, 25 physicians joined the staff at ARMC...These numbers are offset somewhat by the physicians who have retired or have left Alamance County. Nevertheless, there continues to be physician movement to Alamance County.

Indigent Care

Health care access is most apparent when looking at the health care needs of the county's indigent population. For example, indigent care provided at the Emergency Room of Alamance Regional Medical Center results in only 32 cents of every dollar in actual charges being collected. Not only is indigent care a burden on the hospital, but it also has financial and service ramifications for health care providers throughout the county. Perhaps most importantly, such emergency room indigent care is an ineffective way to deliver health care services—prevention of disease is not addressed, there is no continuity of care, and chronic health problems are not dealt with in an effective manner.

Participants consulted for the preparation of this Section were quick to point to the *BCMS Project Access* in Buncombe County (Asheville area) as an exemplary program of public/private cooperation in addressing access to health care, including particularly, the indigent population. The following is a description of the program, written for the Innovations in American Government Awards Program, for which it was a 1998 winner.

BCMS (Buncombe County Medical Society) Project Access

Like many local governments, our County had used its indigent care fund (\$600,000 per year) to partially subsidize area hospitals for unreimbursed indigent care provided through emergency rooms. Our unique policy innovation now applies our indigent care funds to foster and support a broader, more cost-effective, enthusiastically supported and sustainable indigent care program involving multiple public/private partnerships. This resourceful system leverages over \$3.5 million in free care each year, and thereby provides virtually unrestricted access to healthcare for all of our medically indigent citizens at minimal expense to the County.

The creative initiative, called BCMS (Buncombe County Medical Society) Project Access, has created vital connectivity between the Buncombe County Health Center (our public health department), Buncombe County Department of Social Services (our Medicaid agency), and BCMS (a non-profit professional association of physicians). Area hospitals, indigent care clinics and pharmacies are also directly involved in providing universal, on-demand access to the full continuum of healthcare for our indigent citizens.

Inventive multi-agency, intergovernmental collaboration between our Department of Social Services (DSS), Buncombe County Health Center (BCHC) and County Administrative Office, coupled with strategic partnerships with non-profit and for-profit organizations have been key to our success. BCMS recruits physician volunteers who accept patient referrals from BCHC and other indigent care clinics. The clinics provide front-line primary care services. Cost-saving public/private contracts have placed DSS eligibility specialists in the clinics to improve access to related County services.

The central component of BCMS Project Access is a unique contract between our County and BCMS that cultivates the support of nearly 500 (80%) of our private practicing physicians. BCMS provides contract services for program oversight, physician volunteer recruitment and retention, coordination and tracking of patient referrals and services, and management of medication assistance. Through this contract we have also effectively fostered the enthusiastic support of numerous government, non-profit and for-profit organizations for the program.

Area pharmacists provide medications to enrolled patients at cost, which is reimbursed through County funds managed through contract with BCMS as a component of BCMS Project Access. All three of our hospitals provide their services at no charge to enrolled patients. Thus, BCMS Project Access provides comprehensive free physician care, medications, in-patient and outpatient hospital services, patient referral and coordination to 13,000 of our estimated 15,000 uninsured low-income citizens.³⁴

Benefits of BCMS Project Access³⁵

As a result of the success of BCMS Project Access, many studies have been conducted and articles written about the program. One such article included a summary of benefits as a result of the program. Excerpts from the article, summarizing the program's benefits to various stakeholders are included below:

For Private Physicians

Through BCMS Project Access, physicians are able to demonstrate their commitment to the ideals of their profession in an organized, efficient and rewarding way that is properly recognized and clearly defined. Private physicians can evenly share the burden. They can choose to provide care within their practices or volunteer 8 times per year at a volunteer clinic. They can limit their referral slots and/or withdraw at any time.

³⁴ Contact Information: Assistant Health Director, Buncombe County Health Center, 35 Woodfin Street, Asheville, NC 28801-3075, (828) 250-5215

³⁵ Excerpted from an article written by Kayla West, May 1999 and available at the BCMS Project Access website: www.projectaccessonline.org/bcms_project_access.html

Physicians feel their time is well spent because they know that their patients can get the pharmaceuticals, diagnostic tests and hospital services that they need to get well and stay well. They feel rewarded by the good press and appreciation they have fostered for their profession (not individual recognition) within their community by the work that they do. They can be public about their charity care without fear of being overwhelmed with calls from other patients. There is a remarkably low no show rate of approximately 6%.

For The Buncombe County Health Center

The Buncombe County Health Center, the county's health department, is the largest provider of primary care for the medically indigent, providing primary care to 9,000 eligible patients. This clinic has realized impressive efficiencies as a direct result of this initiative. Time previously spent on the phone attempting to locate specialty care for patients is now spent caring for patients. Since patients are able to readily access needed specialty care, appointments previously consumed seeing patients repeatedly for unresolved specialty care needs are now available for new patients and for proper management of existing patients' chronic primary care conditions. Patient capacity has increased by more than 3,000 patients per year (with no additional cost to the county).

For Hospitals

During 1998 hospitals experienced a downward trend line in uncompensated care from \$130,000 per month to \$120,000 per month including inpatient care and all other donated services such as outpatient, lab and x-ray services. This translates into savings of \$120,000 per year. This is while the number of patients enrolled in the program DOUBLED. Emergency room utilization has dropped significantly.

For Patients

13,000 out of an estimated 15,000 low-income uninsured patients below 200% of FPG accessed primary care services at least once during 1998 and every one of those that needed specialty or hospital care received it. . . Over 80% of patients surveyed reported that their health was either Better (13%) or Much Better (69%) than when they first enrolled. Many patients subsequently become insured through new jobs. Almost half of the 273 patient sample had left the program, and of these, half (25% of the total sample) had become insured, often through an employer.

Other Health Issues³⁶

Several other health issues were raised during the preparation of this plan. These issues include:

Tobacco Use— It was noted that the number one way to reduce morbidity and mortality in Alamance County would be to encourage —by multiple avenues— decreased continuation of tobacco use. Support of statewide efforts for a Quit line and increased cigarette costs were mentioned as specific ways to make a significant impact in this area.

Dental Care— Dental care services were felt to be even less available than medical care for many citizens in Alamance County. (Dental insurance coverage is even less common than medical insurance coverage) The linkage between oral health and overall physical health was noted.

Obesity—This issue, which has only recently drawn attention in the national news media, was mentioned as an increasing problem among both children and adults in Alamance County, as well as throughout the nation. Multi-level interventions might include:

- Strict standards for all food and beverages available in schools, after school programs, and child care,
- Policies to ensure adequate time for physical activity in schools,

³⁶ Information provided under this heading was prompted by specific input and commentary by the Medical Director.

- More community based opportunities for leisure time/recreational physical activity for children and youth (as well as a host of individual/interpersonal behavioral changes).

Role of the Alamance County Destination 2020 Plan in Improving Health Care

Given the complexity of the health care environment, perhaps the most useful information that this Section has attempted to provide is (1) a summary of current and ongoing health care issues, as identified in the Healthy Alamance Community Health Assessment and (2) an overview of the roles and relationships among health care providers in a highly successful health care access program such as BCMS Project Access. While the Buncombe County example may not exactly fit the Alamance situation, there is no doubt that many lessons can be learned from the Project Access program. It is up to the County, working in cooperation with other local area health care providers, to determine whether it can play a greater role in the delivery of improved health care services, while at the same time making more effective use of county tax dollars.

POLICIES FOR IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

Policy 16.1: Alamance County supports Healthy Alamance and its four principal partners (Alamance Regional Medical Center, Alamance County Health Department, Alamance Caswell Area Mental Health Program, and the Alamance County Department of Social Services) in their ongoing efforts to improve access to health services for all citizens of the county.

Policy 16.2: Alamance County encourages innovative public/private approaches to enhancing health care delivery for all citizens, while maximizing the effectiveness of taxpayer dollars.

Policy 16.3: Alamance County recognizes that, in addition to improving health care access, targeted efforts to reduce child asthma, child abuse and substance abuse must be the county's highest health care priorities.

Policy Section 17: Services to Senior Citizens³⁷

The Senior Citizen Population of Alamance County

The 2000 US Census revealed that 14.1% of the population of Alamance County was 65 years of age or older. This compared with a statewide percentage of only 12%-- a significant difference when discussing the age distribution of an entire population. Further, as the post-war baby boomers enter their retirement years, the senior citizen population of Alamance County is expected to increase even more. By the year 2020, nearly one out of every five persons in the County is expected to be over 65 years of age.

According to State agency responsible for issuing permits for adult care homes, Alamance County has over a dozen large rest homes, plus no fewer than 65 other *adult family care homes*³⁸-- more than any other county in North Carolina except Buncombe County (home of the heavily retirement-oriented Asheville area). In addition, the area has two full life-care retirement communities: Twin Lakes Retirement Community and Edgewood Manor. Reasons given as to why so many elderly prefer Alamance County include a low crime rate, favorable climate, adult educational opportunities, accessibility to the Piedmont Triad, access to quality health care (Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as Alamance Regional Medical Center), and low property taxes.

The Structure for Evaluating and Planning the Provision of Services to the Elderly

³⁷ Much of the background information for this section came from an interview with Willie Mae Currin, Chairman of the Alamance County Planning Committee for Services to the Elderly

³⁸ By state law, *adult family care homes* are limited to no more than 6 residents.

The *delivery* of services to the elderly in Alamance County involves a large number of public, non-profit, for-profit and charitable organizations including churches, businesses, human service agencies, medical institutions and federal, state and local government agencies. *Planning* for the provision of services to the elderly, however, involves a complex partnership of the NC Division of Aging, the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, the Alamance County Planning Committee for Services to the Elderly, local service providers, and the Board of County Commissioners of Alamance County.

The NC Division of Aging has as its mission “*to promote independence and enhance the dignity of North Carolina’s older persons and their families and ready younger generations to enjoy their later years.*” Partnering with Area Agencies on Aging, local services and programs, senior leaders, and other public and private interests, the Division is the state agency responsible for planning and coordinating a community-based system of services and protections to advance the social, health, and economic well being of older North Carolinians.

The PTCOG (Piedmont Triad Council of Governments) Area Agency on Aging is responsible for planning, developing, implementing, and coordinating aging services at the regional level. The Agency serves seven counties in the Piedmont Region (Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, and Rockingham) and their 165,000 residents age 60 and older. It is a part of a larger aging network, created by the Older American’s Act of 1965, and dedicated to improving the lives of older Americans nationwide.

The Regional Advisory Committee on Aging meets monthly to advise the staff of the PTCOG Area Agency on Aging on all matters relating to the development of the Regional Area Plan for Aging, and operations conducted to carry it out. This multi-county, 15-member committee also serves as a liaison with older adults, participating agencies, planning committees, and the general population to improve public awareness of the services available to older adults, as well as problems associated with each county’s unmet needs. In addition, they also assist in monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating all policies, programs, and actions that affect older adults in the Region.

The Alamance County Planning Committee for Services to the Elderly is a group of area citizens, appointed by the Alamance County Board of Commissioners, to: (1) Educate citizens as to the existing services available to the county’s elderly, (2) Analyze data on the aging population, services available and costs of services, (3) Identify service gaps and recommend county priority needs for state funding, (4) Discuss issues that affect the quality of life for older adults in the county, (5) Plan for the long range needs of the aging population and systems which are impacted, and (6) Develop an operations plan for achievement of the first five objectives. Planning Committee meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Kernodle Senior Center.

Local Service Providers are the various individual agencies, organizations and businesses that provide services to the elderly of Alamance County. Their participation in the planning process involves reviewing state-generated statistics on the elderly for validation, apprising the local Planning Committee of the services they provide, helping to identify all resources available to the elderly locally, and responding to technical questions regarding the services they provide.

The Board of Commissioners of Alamance County appoints the local Planning Committee, reviews information as it is developed, approves priority needs for the county, and acts upon implementation plans developed by the Planning Committee.

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature was established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1993 to:

- Provide information to senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the General Assembly
- Promote citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the General Assembly

- Assess the legislative needs of older citizens by convening a forum modeled after the General Assembly

The 100 delegates, one from each county, meet at least three times per year to propose legislation to the General Assembly. To date, legislation has been passed as proposed by all six major “issue committees” organized around the following topics:

- long term care
- general legislation
- crime, security and safety
- health
- system/service access
- enrichment opportunities

Basic Services and Service Providers for the Elderly in Alamance County³⁹

The PTCOG Area Agency on Aging identifies the following basic services provided to the elderly “throughout the seven county region”. For each basic service, a local service provider in Alamance County has been identified when known. In some instances, a local service provider offers multiple services. All service providers are located in Burlington.

Information and Case Assistance - Identifies options, opportunities, and services that assist older adults, their families and others acting on behalf of older adults in their efforts to acquire information about programs and services to meet their needs. *Local service provider: Alamance ElderCare, Inc.*

Care Management - A coordinated care function which, through information gathering, assessment/reassessments, monitoring, advocating, and advocacy, assists older adults with their complex care needs by identifying, accessing and coordinating services which are necessary to enable the individual to remain in the least restrictive environment while maximizing the individual’s ability to function independently. *Local service provider: Alamance ElderCare, Inc.*

In-Home Aide Services - Paraprofessional services which assist the individual and/or family with essential home management and/or personal care tasks and/or supervision necessary to enable the individual to function effectively as long as possible. *Local service provider: Community Care, Inc.*

Respite Care - Provided to caregivers of elders, allowing respite so elders may remain in home. *Local service provider: Friendship Center of Alamance, Inc.*

Hospice Care – Provides end of life care to patients and families facing a terminal illness. Hospice emphasizes palliative rather than curative treatment; quality rather than quantity of life. The dying are comforted, professional medical care is given, and sophisticated symptom relief provided. *Local service provider: Alamance-Caswell Hospice Home.*

Caregiver Support - A new category of supportive services to caregivers added to federal aging programs in the last quarter of 2000. Four types of services are available for funding and assistance through the Caregiver Support Act of 2000: 1) information and assistance; 2) counseling, organization of support groups, and caregiver training; 3) respite care; and 4) supplemental services to compliment the care provided by caregivers. *Local service providers: Alamance ElderCare, Inc. 1) and 2), Friendship Center of Alamance, Inc 3), and Community Care, Inc. 4).*

Adult Day Care/Adult Day Health - Service intended to provide a protective setting, supportive services and opportunities for socialization, stimulation and enrichment to assist functionally impaired older adults to maintain or improve the ability to function with some degree of independence, thereby enhancing their prospects for remaining in the community and living satisfying, meaningful lives. *Local service provider: Friendship Center of Alamance, Inc.*

³⁹ This information about basic services to the elderly is from the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, Area Agency on Aging.

Home Delivered Meals - Provided to impaired older adults to ensure their option to remain at home as long as possible and facilitate the discharge of older persons from hospitals. *Local service provider: Alamance County Meals on Wheels.*

Congregate Nutrition - Congregate nutrition services are intended to promote the health and well being of older adults through the provision of a nutritious meal in various locations throughout the county while also offering nutrition education and supportive services. *Local service provider: Alamance County Community Services Agency, Inc.*

Senior Center Operations - Funding of multi-purpose centers offers activities, education, supports and opportunities within communities for older adults. *Local service provider: J.R. Kernodle Senior Center*

Legal Services - Offered region wide to provide older adults with information on their legal rights, legal advice, legal benefits, entitlements, and community education. *Local service provider: unknown*

Transportation - Travel to and/or from community resources such as medical care facilities, nutrition sites, or other locations for the purpose of accessing needed services or carrying out activities necessary for daily living⁴⁰. *Local service provider: ACTA (Alamance County Transportation Authority) and Alamance County Community Services Agency, Inc. For veterans: VFW office in Graham will provide transportation to appropriate veteran's facilities such as the VA hospitals in Durham and Salisbury.*

Significantly, the Alamance County budget provides funding assistance to most of the service providers identified. The most recent budget, as approved by the County Commissioners, shows a slight (-0.7%) decline in funding to these organizations-- from a total of \$882,720 in FY 2001-2002 down to \$876,146 for FY 2002-2003. (Of note, the amount of funding from the County was not reduced; rather, some federal and state matching funds for senior services were cut.) While the decline is modest, any decrease in funding during a time of continuing increases in the demand for senior services is difficult for these agencies.

Housing Choices Can Open Up Transportation Options for the Elderly

One important issue often mentioned by service providers is the need for improved transportation options for the elderly. Providers frequently state that the elderly need a reliable system of public transit to get them to the doctor or to shop for basic necessities. But to make such transit economically efficient depends on the housing choices made by the elderly (as well as others). Sending a van several miles into the countryside to pick up one senior citizen at their rural home is not cost effective. If seniors wish to have access to public transit at a reasonable cost (without massive subsidies from other taxpayers) then they must choose their retirement housing wisely.

Specifically, senior citizens who live in homes located in rural or even suburban locations eventually *become unable to drive*. Homes in these isolated areas are usually far removed from shopping and medical facilities. Despite the obvious need, bus service is difficult to provide, due to the high costs of serving these scattered home sites. The answer is not to spend even more money on uneconomical, publicly subsidized transportation services, but rather to change the inefficient development pattern that makes public transit so expensive today.

Fortunately, there are a variety of new housing forms reaching the market which cater to the elderly and which can make public transit much more cost effective, if properly laid out. Patio homes, condominiums, zero-lot line housing, shared housing, granny flats, and front porch neighborhoods all serve to cluster houses closer together. At the same time, housing designed in conjunction with long-term care also usually lends itself to mass transit services. Group housing, assisted living, nursing homes, and a variety of other alternatives make buses and vans cost effective.

⁴⁰ In addition to agency related transportation services, committee members identified church vans, modified for handicapped access, as another important means of providing mobility to senior citizens.

Obviously, changes in housing choice do not occur overnight. Yet, as the great bulk of the baby boom generation continues to age over the next two to three decades, interest in such housing will naturally evolve. Baby boomers who built large houses in the suburbs to raise their families may eventually seek smaller homes closer to services. Like other societal trends, it may take several successful examples to demonstrate how such development can be well done.

POLICIES ON SERVICES TO SENIOR CITIZENS

Policy 17.1: The County shall continue to support a coordinated program of services to the elderly, as provided by partnerships of public, non-profit, for profit, charitable and faith-based organizations.

Policy 17.2: The County supports long range planning for services and facilities for the elderly, particularly in anticipation of the aging of the large baby boom generation.

Policy 17.3: The County shall encourage development patterns and housing choices that allow for more cost-effective transportation options for senior citizens, including public transit.

Policy Section 18: Community Appearance

Community appearance and image are important factors for community growth and well being. An attractive community not only enhances the quality of life of existing residents, but is also an important tool in attracting visitors and desirable businesses (i.e. higher paying jobs) to the area. Components of community appearance can include a multitude of visual images including the control of roadside litter, the presence or absence of street trees, the appearance of public and private signage, streetscape conditions, parking lot landscaping, the presence or absence of overhead wires, the prevalence of dilapidated buildings, junked cars and yard junk, and the way in which local development practices seek to preserve the natural features of land in the community.

Tree Preservation

As Alamance County has become more urbanized, the appearance of much of the county has shifted from a rural landscape of farms, pastures and woodlands to a suburban landscape of new subdivisions, commercial strip developments, asphalt parking lots and related signage. Not only is this change in appearance less appealing to the average citizen, but it also contributes to higher ambient air temperatures in summer and more pollution.

One relatively simple way to help mitigate this change is to preserve existing trees and incorporate them into development plans rather than clear-cutting the property. Tree preservation can be quite effective in making new developments more visually appealing and their lots easier to sell. Retaining trees will also keep Alamance County a greener, more beautiful place in which to live.

Intensive commercial and multi-family developments, in particular, can benefit from the preservation of trees, even if done only around the perimeter of the property. At the same time, single-family neighborhoods consume the vast majority of all developed land in the county. It therefore makes sense to encourage, though not require, new single family subdivisions to preserve trees, particularly when such trees have inherent value due to their size or species. This plan therefore recommends that the county establish tree preservation and planting guidelines for both commercial and residential developments.

Special Highway Travel Corridors

In addition to tree preservation, public attitudes about community appearance usually show good support for maintaining and improving the general appearance of properties along the county's major highways. State enabling legislation allows local governments in North Carolina to establish special controls and

incentives for development along designated highways or segments of highways of the community's choosing. In the case of Alamance County, highways that might be considered for special treatment include Interstate 40/85, U.S. Highway 70, and State Highways 49, 54, 61, 62, 87 and 119. In addition to tree preservation, such standards might include special controls over signage, parking lot landscaping and exterior lighting, among other features.

As an alternative to implementing special development controls only along these specially designated highways, the County may wish to establish general development standards that apply to commercial development anywhere in the county. Such general standards are addressed in the paragraphs below. *(Also see Policy Section 4: Commercial and Office Development)*

Commercial Landscaping

Alamance County has few development standards for the landscaping of parking lots and commercial development sites. Without such standards, landscaping budgets are often the first item to be cut when commercial developers are looking to save on site development costs. Once the project is built, the "sea of asphalt" look of many commercial developments becomes a permanent addition to the community. This plan recommends that the County adopt at least minimal landscape standards to move the County's requirements closer to those one would expect to find in a community with a sense of pride in its heritage, as well as its future.

Signage

Poorly planned, overdone commercial signage can be one of the most dominant and unsightly aspects of the built environment along a street. A garish mish-mash of competing, pole-mounted signs and billboards does little to complement the rural or suburban landscapes of unincorporated Alamance County. Even a casual observation of the abundance of billboards in Alamance County compared to adjoining counties reveals the lack of signage standards in the county. Alamance County would benefit from the adoption of a sign ordinance, setting forth at least minimal standards for commercial signage.

Utility Poles and Wires

Most citizens of Alamance County, if asked about whether they would prefer that utility wires be above ground or below, would undoubtedly prefer the latter. This perspective is certainly recognized by some developers and homebuilders in the county, who routinely place utilities underground in new subdivisions. However, in some locations, where the ground is particularly rocky or where considerable distance must be traversed before reaching the new development, it is necessary to employ overhead utilities leading up to the development, and then underground utilities within the development.

Communications Towers

In recent years Alamance County, like most other urbanizing counties in the United States, has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of communications towers, mainly to serve the burgeoning cellular telephone industry. Typically, public attitudes about such towers vary with their placement relative to residential areas. Many cities and counties in North Carolina, including Guilford County, Orange County, and the City of Burlington, to name a few, have responded with cell tower ordinances, setting standards for their placement and design. Alamance County has not enacted a cell tower ordinance to date. As a result, the County Planning Office has received a number of calls from cell phone companies seeking to place towers just inside the Alamance County line. In light of this situation, the Planning Department is aware of the need to conduct a study concerning the cell tower issue in Alamance County. As soon as the Department's workload allows, the staff would like to prepare a report for the Planning Board, including recommendations, as appropriate, to address the issue.

Dilapidated Structures

As noted in *Policy Section 3: Housing and Neighborhood Development*, Alamance County has no ability to condemn and remove abandoned or dilapidated structures that pose a threat to the health safety, and welfare of county residents. To address this problem, the County should consider enacting and enforcing a minimum housing code as authorized by state law.

Substandard Mobile Homes Used for Storage

In recent years, Alamance County has been experiencing a growing problem concerning the use of substandard mobile homes for storage. In some instances, a substandard mobile home will be abandoned, and the owner will move into another, newer mobile home placed on the same lot. In other instances, an old mobile home will be placed in the back yard in much the same way a homeowner might place a storage shed in back of the house. Such substandard mobile homes are unsightly at best, and a health hazard at worst. This plan recommends, therefore, that permits for the placement of new manufactured homes be issued conditioned upon proof that any existing mobile home on the same lot has been properly disposed of. (Also see Policy Section 3: Housing and Neighborhood Development for a more complete discussion of this issue.)

Junked Cars

State enabling legislation authorizes cities and counties to require the removal of abandoned vehicles and junked cars within view of public rights of way. Alamance County has no junked car ordinance. Given the common use of such ordinances throughout the state, and the abundance of local government experience in enforcing them, such an ordinance could be adopted quite easily. While a lack of County enforcement personnel would likely prevent the proactive enforcement of a junked car ordinance, such an ordinance could be enforced on a complaint driven basis.

Illegal Junkyards

Alamance County has a junkyard ordinance regulating the design and operation of commercial (i.e. income producing) junkyards. The ordinance requires that commercial junkyard operators apply for a license through the County. The irony of the County's authority over junkyards is that the present ordinance exercises control over lawful operations while apparently doing nothing about unlawful operations. In other words, if a person simply stores a number of unlicensed vehicles on their property without seeking a County license, the County currently ignores the offender. The apparent loophole in the ordinance is how to prove whether or not a number of unlicensed vehicles are a source of income to the owner. At present, the County does not have adequate personnel to take the time to make such a determination and to do the necessary follow-up work to enforce the law. This plan recommends that the problems with the existing ordinance be addressed so that proper enforcement may occur.

Roadside Littering⁴¹

Alamance County is not immune from the roadside litter problem that plagues so many American communities. While there is not an anti-litter program within Alamance County government, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Highway Maintenance Division operates several anti-litter programs covering 926 miles of highway in Alamance County. The various programs are described as follows:

Adopt-A-Highway Program: This is a program capitalizing on the volunteer efforts of community and service organizations willing to “adopt” a specific stretch of highway, normally a mile or less, anywhere in the county. Organizations must be approved for participation in the program, and must agree to pick up litter along their adopted section of highway at least twice per year. Refuse bags are provided free of charge at the NCDOT Maintenance Yard on Prison Camp Road. Sign-ups are reissued to such organizations on an annual basis.

Bi-Annual Statewide Litter Sweep: This program operates twice per year in communities across the state. Volunteers are urged to turn out in force during these two, 2-week periods in April and September. NCDOT Maintenance crews also concentrate their manpower and equipment during these two intensive periods of litter pick up.

Medium Custody Inmate Litter Pickup Program: This cooperative program is a joint effort of the NCDOT and the State Department of Corrections. Typically, eight convicted felons are escorted by two armed corrections officers to complete litter pick up along interstates and more remote highway segments. This program generally guarantees the services of inmates on a regular basis and is therefore quite effective.

“Honor Guard” Inmate Litter Pickup (Community Work Program): This program is also a joint effort of the NCDOT and the State Department of Corrections. In this program, “honor guard” inmates who are ready for parole, and who are considered less at risk for escape, complete litter pick up along road or street sections anywhere in the County. Roads eligible for this program might include, for example, Graham Hopedale Road, Church Street, and Huffman Mill Road. Unlike the Medium Custody Program, however, inmates are available to NCDOT only on a first come first serve basis. This program, therefore, does not guarantee the services of inmates on a regular basis.

Community Service Program: This program is a joint effort of the NCDOT and the County Court System. Persons convicted of first time DWI and lesser drug offenses may be sentenced to complete community service work. Upon sentencing, these persons may be assigned by the Community Service Work Program Placement/Verification Office for litter pick up duty. Assignments are usually completed on Saturday, with no guarantee as to how many workers will show up.

Swat a Litter Bug Program: This program involves the general public in identifying motorists who litter or drive uncovered trucks, resulting in litter. Observers are asked to provide the license number, time/date/place of littering to the Office of Beautification Programs at NCDOT. The license number is then used by NCDOT for identification of the vehicle owner. A letter is sent to the vehicle owner advising them of the observed infraction and warning that legal action and a fine of up to a \$1000 may be incurred upon the next offense.

Streamside Litter/Pollution

In addition to roadside litter, several 2020 committee members commented that Alamance County also suffers from litter and trash being deposited on properties adjoining area streams. This is unsightly to those who may be boating on the stream (e.g. the Haw River Corridor, in particular), and ruins the experience for those who might return to boat again in Alamance County or recommend it to others. Further, when seasonal or occasional flooding occurs, the streamside trash is washed into the water,

⁴¹ Much of the information for this section on littering came from a telephone interview with Mike Venable, County Maintenance Engineer for Alamance County with the NC Department Of Transportation, June 20, 2002.

polluting the stream, even as major polluters have “cleaned up their act” with regard to sources of pollution suspended or dissolved in the water.

While the Statewide Litter Sweep mentioned above applies to shorelines and beaches as well as roadsides, the cleanup of private properties adjoining a stream is not easily accomplished. It would appear that the best solution to the problem would be to rely upon the property owners themselves to clean up their own streamside properties and to avoid dumping trash there in the first place. This will require education and a major shift in attitudes concerning the proper disposal of trash. (See following paragraph on *Keep America Beautiful* as well as *Section 9: Solid Waste Management*.)

Keep America Beautiful

If Alamance County elected to take a more proactive role in area beautification and public awareness, it could consider becoming a local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Nationwide, some 500 towns, cities and counties in 40 states run local programs under the guidance of the national non-profit KAB program. In North Carolina there are reportedly 39 local affiliates, including nearby Davie County and the cities of Greensboro and High Point. As an affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful organization, many other opportunities exist to increase public awareness of the littering problem and improve the appearance of area streets, streams and properties.

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE POLICIES

Policy 18.1: The important economic, tourism, and community image benefits of attractive major highway corridors through Alamance County shall be recognized. Such highway corridors should receive priority attention for improved appearance and development standards, including landscaping, signage and tree preservation.

Policy 18.2: Landscape improvements at existing and new commercial developments, particularly as related to breaking up and softening the appearance of expansive parking areas, shall be encouraged.

Policy 18.3: Sign policies and standards should be established and periodically updated to enhance community identity and create a quality business image.

Policy 18.4: The placement of utility wires underground shall be encouraged in all public and private developments.

Policy 18.5: The County shall continue to monitor the placement of communication and other towers in Alamance County, and shall take action as may be determined necessary to regulate their design and location.

Policy 18.6: The County shall not permit the inappropriate use of manufactured or site built homes for storage or abandonment without proper disposal.

Policy 18.7: The County shall not permit the establishment and operation of unlicensed junkyards. Similarly, junked cars shall not be permitted to remain in locations visible from any public right of way, except as may be specifically permitted within an approved junkyard.

Policy 18.8: Littering of public roadsides, streamsides and other properties, whether from individual “litterbugs”, illegal dumping, or drivers of inadequately covered trucks, shall not be tolerated. The County supports programs that prevent litter, clean up roadsides and streamsides, and hold accountable those who would abuse our local environment and denigrate the image of our area.

Policy Section 19: Historic Preservation

Economic Value of Historic Preservation

The preservation of an area's cultural and architectural history is becoming increasingly associated with the image of quality communities across the nation. Tangible evidence of a community's efforts to preserve its heritage often conveys to visitors and prospective businesses a sense of pride in place. Historic preservation can also be a significant part of a community's economic development strategy, particularly as it applies to tourism interest. Increasingly, visitors to an area come not only to experience entertainment oriented tourist attractions, but also to experience the culture and heritage unique to the community. Heritage tourism is the term used to describe this growing segment of the travel industry. For Alamance County, a heritage related especially to the development, growth and ultimate decline of the textile industry offers considerable opportunity for creating a tourism experience quite unique in the world.

Chronological Sequence of Local Historic Preservation Efforts⁴²

Interest in historic preservation usually evolves over a number of years, initially with a small number of interested individuals, and then with the broader community. Historic preservation initiatives in Alamance County began formally in the late 1970's and have gradually expanded since that time. A chronological sequence of certain benchmark events follows. The reader will observe that the various benchmark events involve a combination of activities undertaken by the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission (county-wide) and the Burlington Historic Resources Commission (within the City of Burlington and its extraterritorial jurisdiction).

- In 1977, the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission (HPC) was founded.
- In 1978, the Burlington Historic District Commission was formed.
- In 1980, the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission completed its first architectural inventory of structures located throughout the county.
- In 1982, a survey of Burlington's historic architecture was completed.
- In 1984, two districts and 16 properties in Burlington were named to the National Register of Historic Places.
- In 1985, the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission achieved CLG (Certified Local Government) status, making it one of the first in the state to do so.
- In 1986, Alamance County, with funding from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, sponsored an archaeological survey covering 1,030 acres. As a result of the survey, sixty-five previously unrecorded archaeological sites were identified. A special treatment on "The Potters of Alamance County" was part of the final report. (Today, the Historic Preservation Office maintains information on over 350 prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in Alamance County.)
- In 1987, the first locally designated historic district was established in West Burlington. Review of exterior architectural changes to historic properties, requiring the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness, was instituted, as allowed under state law. The Burlington Historic District Commission published *An Architectural History of Burlington, North Carolina*.

⁴² Much of the information for this chronological summary was provided by Destination 2020 Work Group Member Helen Walton, Lynn Cowen, PNC Representative and on-site manager at the historic Glencoe Mill Village Site and Max Way, member of the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission. The balance of the Section contains information provided, in part, by the North Carolina Office of Archives and History. Some information about historic preservation efforts in the City of Burlington was derived from the Burlington 2000 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 1991. Other general information was found in the Alamance County Comprehensive Development plan, 1991.

- In 1988, the City changed the Burlington Historic District Commission to the Historic Resources Commission to perform the joint duties of regulating historic districts and historic properties within the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The Commission also achieved CLG status that year. Three local landmarks were named that year: The Depot (1892), the Carousel (1910), and East Davis Street (Minter-Coble House).
- Also in 1988, Burlington's downtown entered the National Main Street Program, emphasizing façade renovations of historic buildings.
- In 1991, about 300 more properties were surveyed. The name of the Historic Resources Commission was changed once more to the Burlington Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with State enabling legislation.
- Also in 1991, downtown Burlington became listed on the National Register, thereby making tax credits available for renovations of income-producing properties. The tax credits became a major catalyst for building renovation and reuse, including particularly, the entry of Lab Corps as a major property owner in the downtown area.
- In 1992, Burlington City Council adopted a citywide preservation plan. The City's design review guidelines were also reworked, and have since been used as a model across the State.
- In 1994, Lab Corps renovation efforts in downtown Burlington were recognized with a prestigious award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- In 1999, Glencoe Mill Village (1880's), located in the City of Burlington's extraterritorial jurisdiction, was designated a local historic district. (Since that time Glencoe has also been placed on the study list for designation as a national landmark—Glencoe was the last water driven mill in Alamance County.)
- In 2000, The East Davis Street Historic District was listed in the National Register.
- In 2001, the Broad Street-Fifth Street Historic District was listed in the National Register.
- In 2002, the County's Historic Properties Commission began an update to the architectural survey first completed in 1980. Funding for this update came primarily from Alamance County; one third of the project funding came from the State Historic Preservation Office.

A Focus on the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission⁴³

While progress in the area of historic preservation locally has been a shared responsibility (with several organizations and many individuals involved) it is appropriate that this strategic plan for Alamance County focus particularly on the work of the Alamance County Historic Properties Commission. As noted in the HPC's mission statement, the HPC is the appointed public body whose charge is to *"preserve and protect Alamance County's historic architecture and landmarks while increasing citizen awareness of Alamance County history."*

The HPC is made up of eleven citizen members who have a broad base of knowledge and interest in the historic resources of Alamance County, both on a professional level and on an individual interest level. As will be seen in the summation of accomplishments listed below, the County's HPC has been quite active over the years, earning many awards for the effort put forth:

- The Alamance County Historic Properties Commission (HPC) was founded on October 21, 1977 to aid in the preservation and to build awareness of the historic and cultural resources of

⁴³ The information for this section was provided by Craig Harmon, Director of Planning for Alamance County.

Alamance County. The HPC achieved CLG (Certified Local Government) status in 1985 making it one of the first in the state to do so.

- The HPC has been actively involved in recognizing Alamance County's role in the American Revolution by dedicating monuments at the battle sites of The Battle of Clapp's Mill (won a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association of State and Local History), Pyle's Massacre, as well as assisting with the erection of a monument at the Battle of Lindley's Mill in southern Alamance County.
- The HPC assisted in the production of an education video for schools telling the story of the Battle of Lindley's Mill, which it won several awards for in 1983 (The Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit).
- The HPC won the Gertrude S. Carraway Award in 1991 for their work on the restoration of the McCray One-room Schoolhouse (Est. 1916). The Alamance-Burlington School System now uses this school as part of the educational experience. Fifth graders throughout the system spend one day of class here or at the county's other restored one-room schoolhouse experiencing what school used to be like.
- The HPC won the Albert Ray Newsome Award for Outstanding Programs of Historical Activity related to the Dr. Charles Drew Memorial.
- As noted in the chronological sequence above, in 1980 the HPC completed its first architectural inventory of structures located throughout the county. This survey has been updated on multiple occasions (1982, 1991 and an update is currently under way). The 1991 update was a study of all log structures in the HPC's jurisdiction.
- In 1998 the Commission conducted a detailed survey and study of Stoner's Cemetery, an early 19th century private cemetery, located in south-central Alamance County.
- The Alamance HPC shared joint sponsorship with the City of Burlington and Preservation North Carolina in the restoration of Glencoe Mill Village. (Now a local district, certificates of appropriateness are issued by the Burlington HRC)
- The HPC is also charged with recommending structures to be designated to the National Registry for sites or structures. (See section immediately following)

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the State of North Carolina. The National Register was created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to recognize and protect properties of historic and cultural significance. National Register listing is primarily an honor, meaning that a property has been evaluated and determined to be worthy of preservation. The listing of a historic or archaeological property in the National Register does not obligate or restrict a private owner in any way unless the owner seeks a federal benefit such as a grant or tax credit. For a private owner, the chief practical benefit of National Register listing is eligibility for Federal and State tax credits when rehabilitating properties (See Preservation Tax Credits below).

There are more than fifty National Register listings in Alamance County. These include five historic districts in Burlington-- plus Glencoe in the City's ETJ, two districts in Graham and one in Elon College, two rural textile mill districts, and numerous individual properties across the county. In addition, the Village of Alamance is National Register eligible, but has not yet sought designation as such.

Local Preservation Commissions

Local governments may establish a *historic preservation commission* under North Carolina General Statutes 160A-400.1-400.14. A preservation commission may carry out a comprehensive preservation program, including recommending individual properties and areas for designation by the local governing board as landmarks and historic districts. While a preservation commission works with both districts and landmarks, there are also commissions that work solely with districts (called *historic district commissions*) and those that work solely with individual properties (called *historic landmarks commissions* or *historic properties commissions*). Burlington has a *historic preservation commission*, the County has a *historic properties commission*, and Graham has a *historic district commission*.

Local Landmarks.

Landmark designations apply to individual buildings, structures, sites, areas, or objects that are studied by the local commission and judged to have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural value. Designation means that the community believes the property deserves recognition and protection. The local government designates landmarks through passage of an ordinance. Owners of landmarks are eligible to apply for an annual 50% property tax deferral as long as the property's important historic features are maintained. There are eleven designated landmarks in Alamance County.

Locally Designated Historic Districts.

Historic district designation is a type of local government *zoning* that usually applies to a neighborhood or older commercial district that includes many historic properties. The zoning provides controls over changes to the appearance of existing buildings and construction of new ones. Designation means that the community believes the architecture, history, and character of the area are worthy of recognition and protection. Historic district zoning can improve property values by stabilizing and enhancing the neighborhood's character, and it benefits property owners by protecting them from inappropriate changes by other owners. Unlike landmark designations, local historic district designation has no effect on local property taxes (other than long term property value stabilization). There are three locally designated historic districts in Alamance County and its municipalities.

Federal and State Preservation Tax Credits

Rehabilitations of historic buildings in the National Register of Historic Places can bring substantial financial benefits to their owners:

- A 20% federal investment tax credit can be claimed against the cost of a certified rehabilitation of an income-producing historic building.
- A 20% state tax credit for rehabilitations of income-producing historic properties can be "piggybacked" to the 20% federal investment tax credit. In effect, the combined federal-state credits reduce the cost of a certified rehabilitation of an income-producing historic structure by 40%.
- Effective January 1, 1998, a state tax credit of 30% became available for qualifying rehabilitations of non-income-producing historic structures, including owner-occupied personal residences. (There is no equivalent federal credit for such rehabilitations, however.)

According to records available from the State Office of Archives and History, numerous income-producing tax credit projects have been completed in Alamance County, including the Alamance Hotel, the Atlantic Bank and Trust Building, the Kayser-Roth Building and the Federal Building, all in Burlington. Since the passage of the 1998 State tax credit for non-income producing properties, dozens of residential renovation projects have also been completed.

Museums

Museums in Alamance County dedicated, in part, to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the area include the Alamance County Historic Museum, the Haw River Museum, and the Graham Museum. There has also been discussion of a textile mill museum, perhaps at the Glencoe Mill Village site. The three existing historical museums are described more fully below⁴⁴:

Alamance County Historical Museum

19th century house-museum depicting the life of textile pioneer Edwin Michael (E.M.) Holt through period room settings, docent-hosted tours and an audio-visual presentation. Upper floor devoted to rotating and temporary exhibits such as Alamance County quilts, Native American artifacts, traditional pottery, antique clothing, antique toys, 19th century military artifacts, and many other exhibits dealing with aspects of local history. Location: 4777 South NC 62, Burlington.

Haw River Historical Museum

The history of a 250-year old town, which had a central role in the development of the State's textile industry and railroad, is depicted in a large collection of photographs and artifacts. Some exhibits present the school, churches, homes, hobbies, clubs and every day life; others show the mills, railroads and river. Particular emphasis is on the people of the town who included three NC Governors, Charlie Pool and Artelia Roney Duke. Location: 201 Main Street, Haw River

Graham Historical Museum

The Graham Historical Museum opened June 21, 2001. The museum is the home for Graham Fire Departments Engine 1, a 1930 Seagraves fire truck and other fire fighting equipment. The museum has local pottery, weapons, military artifacts, and other historical pieces that are related to the history of the citizens of Graham. The museum is operated by the Graham Historical Society. Location: 135 W. Elm Street, Graham

Historic Sites

Alamance County has a wealth of historic sites open for visitation by the public. Several of the area's most significant historic sites are described more fully below.⁴⁵

Alamance County Courthouse

The Alamance County Courthouse is an imposing three-story stone, neo-classic revival building located on a hexagonal plot in the center of Graham's commercial district. Designed in 1924 by Harry Barton, a noted architect of the period, the structure replaced the original brick courthouse built in 1849. Sophisticated and richly detailed, the Alamance County Courthouse is the major landmark in Graham. Its scale, style, and materials blend well with the town's commercial buildings, many of which are contemporaries of the courthouse. Location: 1 Court Square, Graham.

Alamance Battleground State Historic Site (1771)

The site where Royal Governor William Tryon led the NC Militia against the Regulators in battle on May 16, 1771. Located on the grounds is the Allen House, a log dwelling characteristic of those lived in by frontier people on the western fringes of the colony. The Allen house was constructed around 1780 and

⁴⁴ This information was obtained from the website of the Burlington and Alamance County Convention and Visitor's Bureau. For more information on each museum's hours of operation, admission fee (if any) and directions to get there, the reader is directed to that website: www.burlington-area-nc.org/, or visit the C and V Bureau at the Burlington-Alamance Chamber of Commerce Building, 610 South Lexington Avenue, Burlington, North Carolina 27216-0519. Telephone 800-637-3804.

⁴⁵ See preceding footnote for source.

was donated by descendants of the family and restored and refurbished with its original furnishings.
Location: 5803 South NC 62, Burlington

Captain James and Emma Holt White House

(c. 1800, enlarged 1870) Through adaptive restoration, the Alamance County Arts Council has turned the 1871 Queen Anne Style mansion of Captain James and Emma Holt White into an art gallery and a home for the Arts Council office. The Arts Council promotes arts activities and programming and supports arts education throughout Alamance County. The gallery features changing exhibits of artists of local, regional and national acclaim and includes a sales gallery showcasing handmade gifts and crafts by North Carolina artisans. The building is also the home of the Alamance County Historic Museum. The house offers formal reception rooms and garden as well as classrooms and meeting spaces. Location: 213 S. Main Street, Graham.

Cedarock Park and Historical Farm

Cedarock Historical Farm is the original site of the Garrett farm dating back to 1830. It is also the home of the Curtis House, c.1820 and the Huffman Mill Site, c. 1830-1850. Buildings have been restored to their original use. Livestock on the farm include sheep, goats, dairy and beef cattle, and a team of draft mules. Demonstrations of farming techniques used at the turn of the century are available. The farm is located at Cedarock Park, a 414-acre park of gently rolling terrain. Location: 4242 Cedarock Park Road, Burlington.

Snow Camp Historic Site

Historic Snow Camp is a recreated Quaker community, covering the period from pre-Revolutionary times up through the Civil War. The site includes several historic landmarks, a restaurant, seasonal activities and an amphitheatre. The outdoor drama repertory theater presents several productions each summer. The Sword of Peace is a dramatic historical portrayal of the American Revolution and the struggle of the peaceful Quakers. Pathway to Freedom tells the story of the Quakers who assisted the fugitives with the Underground Railroad before the Civil War. Other productions include musicals and children's theater. Location: One Drama Road, Snow Camp, 15 miles south of Burlington.

Burlington Historic Railroad Depot and Amphitheater

The Depot (1892) is one of the most attractive, multipurpose recreation facilities offered in the City. As part of the 1993 Burlington Centennial Celebration, the Depot has been totally renovated. and located on the walls are murals painted depicting Burlington from 1893 to 1993. In addition to being the home of the Burlington Downtown Corporation, the Depot is also used for art classes and other public functions and is available for weddings, receptions and other events. Location: 200 S. Main Street, Downtown Burlington.

Paramount Theater

The Paramount (1928) is the oldest movie theater in Alamance County. Located in historic downtown Burlington, the renovated theater features an art-deco motif and seating for 398 guests. Scheduled events include the "Season of the Paramount" series as well as a variety of community theater performances. The Paramount also features a lobby and mezzanine level for small private receptions. Location: 128 E. Front Street, Downtown Burlington.

1910 Dentzel Menagerie Carousel

The Dentzel Menagerie Carousel (1910) was brought to Burlington in 1948 and restored in 1982. The carousel is the centerpiece of the 76-acre City Park. Built by the Dentzel Carousel Company, Burlington's Carousel has 46 hand-carved animals, including 26 horses. There are only 14 Dentzel Menagerie Carousels remaining intact in the world. The Dentzel carvers were famous for their realism and attention to detail, which is evident by the facial expressions and muscle definition. The horses have real horsehair

tails and all the animals have shiny, round glass eyes. No two animals are alike. Location: S. Church Street (Hwy. 70), Burlington

Glencoe Mill Village (1880's).

This village consists of a cotton mill complex and associated worker housing community, and was built on a 105-acre site along the Haw River between 1880 and 1882. The mill was developed by two sons of Edwin M. Holt, the most influential textile pioneer in the South in the nineteenth century. Glencoe remains one of the best presented mill villages in North Carolina, providing a comprehensive picture of the social and commercial organization of a late 19th century water-powered southern cotton mill village. The property is on the study list for national historic landmark status. The village is currently under restoration - drive-by visitation is welcomed. Property is owned by Preservation North Carolina. Location: River Road, approximately 4 miles north of Burlington, Burlington

Scott Farm/Home Place.

Though not currently a designated historic site, the Scott family farm and home place is a likely candidate for recognition and preservation as a state historic site. This private farm, still in the possession of the Scott family, was the home of two governors of the State of North Carolina.

Highway Historical Marker Programs, State and Local

The *North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program* was established in 1935 by act of the General Assembly (Public Laws, Chapter 197). The program is a joint responsibility of the Research Branch, Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, and the Traffic Engineering Branch, Division of Highways, Department of Transportation. Prior to 1935 the North Carolina Historical Commission (established in 1903) and private organizations (such as the Daughters of the American Revolution) sponsored a small number of historical markers and plaques. The state program, modeled after one begun in Virginia in 1926, was an effort to standardize the practice of marking sites of statewide historical significance. The silver and black markers have become a familiar part of the state's landscape. To date over 1,400 state markers have been erected, with at least one in every county. Of note, the Department of Transportation restricts the placement of state historical markers to numbered state or federal highways, such as N.C. 87 or U.S. 70. Interstates, restricted access routes, city maintained streets, and state roads (SR's) are not eligible.

If the State Highway Historical Marker Program declines to approve a subject or property for a state historical marker, it may be an appropriate topic for a local or private marker. Several counties, cities, and historical groups in North Carolina, including Alamance County's own Historic Properties Commission, sponsor a *local historical marker program*. Each marker is approved for content by the Historic Properties Commission and the HPC's brass seal is provided for placement on the marker.

Candidates for addition to the County HPC (if not State)-sponsored historical marker program might include General John Butler, the Pyle Home, the Cornwallis Camp along the Greater Alamance, or any of the several mill villages that once dotted the Haw River.

Significant Historic Markers

Battle of Clapps Mill Memorial Marker

This battle occurred on March 2, 1791, two weeks prior to the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The skirmish drew fire from both sides resulting in the loss of 8 American Militiamen and, 17 British Regulators. Location: Lake Macintosh, 2704 Huffman Mill Road, Burlington.

Lindley's Mill Marker

This marker represents the battle of September 1781, which took place at Quaker Thomas Lindley's mill, where over 250 soldiers on both sides were killed or wounded. Location: At Cane Creek Bridge on Rock Drive, off Lindley Mill Road near the Eli Whitney community.

Pyle's Defeat Memorial Marker

This marker commemorates the February 1781 bloodbath where American forces slaughtered about 100 colonists loyal to England, under the leadership of Colonel John Pyle. Location: From Exit #145 off Interstate 85/40, going south on Anthony Road, at Old Trail Road.

Trading Path Marker

This marker recognizes one of the original trading paths which once traversed the piedmont area of North Carolina, connecting the American Indian towns of the Chesapeake Bay with those in the Carolinas and Georgia. An organization called the Trading Path Preservation Association is working to further identify and preserve these once important trading routes dating back to pre-colonial times. Location: On Highway 62 in the Village of Alamance.

Local Historic District Markers

The Burlington Historic Resources Commission places classic brown markers at the entrance to all five historic districts under its jurisdiction. In some instances, directional markers of the same brown color are also placed to guide people to the districts.

Role of the County in Protecting Historic Sites and Properties

There are several roles that Alamance County can play in helping to preserve historic sites and properties in the area. Foremost among those is record keeping and the dissemination of historic property information. This could involve, for example, transferring written documentation from prior survey work into more readily available computerized databases and mapped information. It may also involve providing the equipment and space necessary to house the information. To accomplish the transfer of paper data to digital data, it may mean hiring a technician to do the work, even if such a person is only a part-time intern working under the supervision of another county employee.

Once the information is available in digital and mapped form, the County will be in a better position to employ that data in reviews of development proposals, subdivisions of land and other growth and development activities. Except in extreme cases, the purpose of such reviews would not be to stop development, but rather to help insure that such development honors the history of a particular location. This could be done by protecting critical historic sites in common open space, by naming streets after historic figures, families, businesses, or farms, or by other methods. In some cases, it may afford the opportunity for donation of land for tax credits or acquisition of property as an alternative to development.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICIES

Policy 19.1: Local efforts to identify, designate and preserve sites, buildings and districts of particular historic significance shall be supported.

Policy 19.2: Multiple and appropriate adaptive reuse of historic resources shall be encouraged.

Policy 19.3: Development of the tourism and educational potential of the area's architectural, historic and cultural resources shall be encouraged.

Policy 19.4: The destruction of significant architectural, historic and archaeological resources in the planning area shall be discouraged.

Policy 19.5: Development sites containing significant historic resources shall be encouraged to honor such resources within the design of their development proposals. Opportunities may include, for example, incorporating such resources into common open space, donating such areas for tax credits, or making such areas available for acquisition and preservation.

Policy 19.5: Economic development efforts shall encourage the revitalization and reuse of currently unused or underutilized structures, sites and infrastructure in appropriately located areas.

Policy 19.6: Efforts by area municipal governments, non-profit agencies, and private organizations to maintain and restore the architectural and cultural heritage of various town centers in Alamance County shall be encouraged.

Policy Section 20: Cultural Diversity and Acceptance

Until recently, most discussions concerning cultural diversity and acceptance focused primarily on race relations between Blacks and Whites. In the past decade, however, dramatic increases in the Hispanic/Latino population have redirected most attention to addressing this rapidly emerging ethnic group. While economic and social issues concerning the Latino community are similar, in some ways, to those facing the Black community, efforts to deal with the Hispanic/Latino population must also address language barriers and cultural differences inherited from a variety of Spanish speaking nations.

Explosive Growth of the Hispanic/Latino Population

The 2000 Census showed that, during the 1990's, the nation's Hispanic population grew by about 58%, while North Carolina's Hispanic population increased by 394%, the highest in the nation. At the same time, the Hispanic population of Alamance County grew by over 1100%, from 736 in 1990 to 8,835 in 2000. In 1990, Hispanics made up less than 1% of the County's total population; by 2000, this percentage had increased to over 4%. Demographers believe that these numbers are probably low, given that historically, many Latinos are distrustful of government, or may be in the U.S. as illegal immigrants. Reportedly, many did not respond to the 2000 Census or filled out the forms incompletely or inaccurately.⁴⁶

Particular Challenges in Providing Services to the Hispanic/Latino Population

During the first part of 2002, a major Spanish-language newspaper in Charlotte, North Carolina, *La Noticia*, completed a survey of the Charlotte-area Latino market, collecting data from 237 Spanish-speaking consumers.⁴⁷ Only 56% of the respondents said they could speak and read English. For those who had been in the U.S. for less than a year, that figure dropped to 47%.

Significantly, most Latinos are wary of becoming involved in any political or government affairs. Beyond the language barrier, many Latinos have emigrated from places where corruption within the police and other government functions was the norm. Statistics maintained by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department reveal that Latinos are 10 times more likely than any other ethnic group to be robbery victims. Latinos in the Charlotte area also accounted for nearly one fourth of all DUI's (driving under the influence of alcohol) arrests during the latter half of 2001.⁴⁸

Implications for County Services

⁴⁶ As reported in the July 2002 issue of Planning Magazine: Karen Martin, "A City Transformed, A Latin Flavor in Charlotte, North Carolina.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, as reported in the above referenced magazine article.

Given the rapid growth in the Latino population over the past decade and the likelihood that this growth will continue, local governments in Alamance County are faced with the need to make changes in the services they provide. To address the language barrier, for example, local governments may need to recruit and hire bilingual employees and create bilingual brochures explaining garbage collection, public transportation, the payment of utility fees and taxes, and other services. In the area of education, the County school system will have a continuing need for classes teaching English as a Second Language. Obviously, teachers who can speak Spanish will be of value in any subject area. In the area of law enforcement and public safety, 911 operators and dispatchers will need to be conversant in Spanish. Given the high crime rates associated with Latino enclaves, crime prevention programs may need to be focused in these neighborhoods. In the area of parks and recreation, demand for additional soccer fields will undoubtedly grow significantly. (Also see Parks and Recreation Section).

Cooperative Efforts to Meet the Needs of Latinos and Other Special Populations

Given the extremely tight budget of the 2002-2003 fiscal year, as well as the fiscally conservative nature of Alamance County government in general, it is understandable that there may be little support for special programs or near-term expenditures specifically designed to serve the Latino or other special populations. Nonetheless, cultural awareness programs, made available to all County employees at relatively little cost, can help make better use of existing services without adding more staff.

In addition, culturally oriented services will have to come from organizations other than the County. The Chamber of Commerce, for example, has a Community Action Committee, whose goal is to increase cultural awareness and to promote effective dialogue between the business community and the expanding Latino population. The Committee does this, in part, by hosting programs to help educate the business community about the area services available to help employ and meet the needs of the area's Hispanic/Latino population. During 2002, the Community Action Committee arranged to have the director of Hispanic/Latino Affairs for North Carolina speak at the Kernodle Senior Center. The subject was state and local programs designed to meet the needs of the Hispanic/Latino residents of the area.⁴⁹

Beyond the Chamber of Commerce, other community service and non-profit organizations, as well as municipalities, are often in a good position to meet the special needs of Latinos. Churches can provide for day-care and adult literacy programs. Economic development agencies, business councils, employment agencies, and others can work to identify job opportunities. Health agencies and health care providers can develop programs to meet the special health related needs of Latinos and others. Municipalities can employ housing and community development professionals to work with particular neighborhoods on special problems.

Expanded Role of the Business Community

Destination 2020 Committee members made special note of the expanded role that they believe businesses need to play in helping to address the particular economic, educational and social needs of the Latino population. The point was made that the business community is reaping enormous financial benefits from the work performed by Latinos at very low wage rates; therefore, the business community should also share in the effort to provide necessary services to this population group. As noted above, such services may include education, health care, crime prevention, day care, housing, transportation, and recreation, to name a few.

⁴⁹ Beyond promoting cultural awareness and communication, area businesses have a financial incentive to better understand the needs of the Latino population. In the Charlotte area, Latino purchasing power was estimated to be somewhere between \$300 million and \$550 million per year.

POLICIES ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND ACCEPTANCE

Policy 20.1: A “corporate” spirit which embraces cultural diversity, awareness and acceptance shall be promoted within the ranks of the County government organization.

Policy 20.2: Services and facilities provided by the County shall seek to address language barriers and cultural differences among various ethnic groups residing in the county, as staff and funding resources allow.

Policy 20.3: The County encourages its municipal, community service, non-profit, faith-based, and other organizations to develop programs to meet the particular needs of Latino and other ethnic groups residing in the county.

Policy 20.4: The County shall look especially to the business community, a primary beneficiary of Latino labor, to share in the costs of providing necessary services (e.g. education, health care, crime prevention, child care, housing, transportation, and recreation) to the burgeoning Latino population.

Implementation Actions



- *Orderly Growth*
 - *Economic Development*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Education*
 - *Utility Infrastructure*
 - *Quality of Life*
-



Implementation Actions

Alamance County Destination 2020 Strategic Plan

The Implementation Actions set forth in this section are intended to carry out the policies of the Strategic Plan. As such, various actions have been listed under their respective policy heading. These actions essentially function as a "to do list" for Alamance County government. Unlike policy statements that can and should be used over and over again, many implementation actions, once completed, may be checked off the list. Customarily, implementation actions are intended to be carried out within the ensuing five-year period following adoption of the plan. Most actions require staff time, money or both to execute. Many require community support. Some require cooperation from other organizations.

These implementation actions are not intended to be mandatory. Hence, each action begins with the word "*Consider...*". The entire list should be revisited annually as part of the County's work program and budget process. Thus, these implementation actions are presented at the back of the plan in a single, freestanding section that may be removed, revised and replaced on an annual basis.

1. Preferred Development Pattern

- a. Consider adopting *water and sewer extension policies* that work with municipalities to direct new growth and development to locations within or adjoining existing urban areas.
- b. Consider adopting new development standards that provide for *greenspace developments* as an option to typical large-lot single-family development.
- c. Consider adopting new development standards that provide for *front porch neighborhood development* as an option to typical large-lot single-family development.
- d. Consider *zoning* those parts of Alamance County that are experiencing the greatest development pressures. Include opportunities for *compatible mixed-use development*.

2. Agricultural and Rural Area Preservation

- a. Consider carrying out all actions identified under Policy Section 1 above, so as to encourage a *town and country development pattern*, more compact growth, and to preserve open space and prime agricultural land.
- b. Consider greater support and public education to strengthen and expand the county's *agricultural preservation district program*.

- c. Consider encouraging the County School Board to *place new schools* in locations that will facilitate urban infill development and compact growth, rather than suburban expansion, sprawl and consumption of farmland.

3. Housing and Neighborhood Development

- a. Consider establishing a *new minimum lot size category* that encourages something closer to true rural development, i.e. lot sizes no less than 5 or 10 acres. This would be in addition to, rather than in place of, other minimum lot size options.
- b. Consider working with municipalities to encourage *more areas for smaller lots* (i.e. $\leq 8,000$ sq.ft.) and *compatible mixed uses* close to existing urban areas where water and sewer services are available.
- c. Consider amending the County subdivision regulations to curtail the proliferation of *residential lots stripped along public highways*. This would include correcting the provision that inadvertently encourages 30,000 square foot lots along highways compared to 1-acre lots on private roads.
- d. Consider amending the County subdivision regulations to curtail the use of *flag lots along major highways*, except under truly extenuating circumstances.
- e. Consider amending the County subdivision regulations to reduce the use of *private roads* in residential developments.
- f. Consider amending the County subdivision regulations to allow for *greenspace developments* and *front porch neighborhoods* under specified conditions.
- g. Consider offering incentives to, or requiring, developers to install sidewalks in housing developments.
- h. Consider zoning certain areas of the County for doublewide *manufactured homes meeting higher appearance standards* (i.e. permanent masonry foundation, pitched roof and overhang, adequate entry porch, orientation to the street, etc.)
- i. Consider adopting a *minimum housing code* requiring, in part, that substandard and dilapidated structures, including mobile homes, be properly removed and disposed of. Consider initially subsidizing such disposal as a near term incentive to facilitate action by owners. (Also see actions under Policy Section 18)
- j. Consider passing an ordinance that requires proper *disposal or relocation of an existing mobile home* before the issuance of a permit for a new manufactured home on the same lot. (Also see actions under Policy Section 18)
- k. Consider allowing an *accessory housing unit* (carriage house, garage apartment, granny flat, accessory apartment) on a lot with a principal residence under specified conditions.
- l. Consider using zoning to prevent *residential development from encroaching* upon the airport and to protect prospective industrial development sites.
- m. Consider adopting an ordinance that prohibits the inappropriate use of manufactured or site built homes for *storage, illegal occupancy or abandonment*.
- n. Consider using zoning to encourage *higher density housing* to locate close to urban services, and convenient to shopping and employment centers.

4. Commercial and Office Development

- a. Consider using zoning to encourage *commercial development* to locate in clusters within existing town and community centers, rather than stripped along the highway.
- b. Consider using zoning to prevent *incompatible large-scale commercial* development from encroaching upon residential areas.
- c. Consider allowing *compatible, residentially scaled and designed commercial development* to be incorporated into new “village centers” within walking and biking distance of most of the homes in the development.
- d. Consider using zoning to encourage *commercial development in rural areas* to locate at or near the intersection of two major roads, thereby allowing for access from several directions.
- e. Consider adopting a *sign ordinance* that discourages overdone, cluttered, elevated signage in favor of less cluttered, lower height, tasteful signage.
- f. Consider adopting standards for *parking lot design* that require (1) the placement of most parking to the rear or side of businesses and (2) adjoining parking lots to be connected.
- g. Consider adopting minimum *landscaping and buffering* requirements for new commercial development.
- h. Consider requiring that a minimum *row of trees* be left along the roadside right of way of special highway corridors when new commercial property is developed.
- i. Consider using zoning to encourage the placement of *office and institutional development* as a buffer between large-scale commercial uses and residential uses.

5. Industrial Development

- a. Consider using objective performance standards (measurable values) rather than general descriptors (clean, dirty) to quantify the level of environmental, social and economic impact when evaluating the types of *industries appropriate for Alamance County*.
- b. Consider using objective performance standards (measurable values) to rule out the placement of certain types of *hazardous waste facilities* in Alamance County.
- c. Consider using zoning to locate and preserve appropriate land areas and sites (e.g. with rail sidings, highway access, water, sewer, natural gas, electric utilities, suitable soils and topography) for *future industrial and business prospects*, and to protect such areas and sites from encroachment by residential uses.

6. Transportation

- a. Consider continued monitoring of initiatives to establish *high-speed rail* and *intra-state rail* services with stops in Alamance County. Continue lobbying efforts.
- b. Consider working closely with the MPO, the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation, and the newly created Alamance County Transit Authority, to establish a combination of flexible and fixed route *bus service* for the area.

- c. Consider employing land use and development controls to encourage *transit sensitive development*, meaning development patterns that revolve around focal points that could become future transit stops.
- d. Consider continued support for *runway expansion and other facility improvements* at the Burlington Alamance Regional Airport.
- e. Consider continued support for transportation projects that improve *access to the Burlington Alamance Regional Airport*.
- f. Consider requesting that NCDOT include *bicycle and pedestrian facilities*, whether on-road or off-road, as an integral part of appropriate new and expanded roadway projects in Alamance County.
- g. Consider employing driveway access management, minimum lot frontages, and parallel access roads to control the *frequency of driveways* entering major roadways.
- h. Consider requiring new commercial enterprises on adjoining land parcels to design and construct their *parking lots for connectivity*. (Also see actions under Policy Section 4: Commercial Development.)
- i. Consider requiring that new neighborhoods and subdivisions employ a fully connected *honeycomb of local streets* within and between neighborhoods. Minimize cul de sacs and isolated, unconnected subdivisions.

7. Water and Sewer Services

- a. Consider endorsing the *regionalization of water and sewer facilities* in Alamance County, while also supporting their effective use as a growth management tool (encouraging compact growth near towns, discouraging farmland consumption, avoiding ecologically valuable areas, etc.).
- b. Consider educating the public as to (1) the real costs of sewage collection and treatment systems, (2) the density of the customer base necessary to support such systems and (3) the reasons why “*county-wide sewer*” is not only unlikely, but also undesirable.
- c. Consider contributing financial support for the extension of *water and sewer lines to economic development projects* on urban area development sites, regardless of their location in or outside of a municipality.
- d. Consider encouraging the use of *package sewage treatment plants* to allow for the creation of greenspace developments where appropriate.
- e. Consider requiring that *sewer lines feeding new package sewage treatment plants* be designed for assimilation into a centralized sewage treatment system at some point in the future.

8. School Facilities

- a. Consider encouraging the County School Board to *place new schools* in locations that will facilitate urban infill development and compact growth, rather than suburban expansion. (Also see Policy Section 2: Agricultural and Rural Area Preservation)
- b. Consider encouraging developers to incorporate *new school sites* into the overall design of walkable, master planned communities, rather than placing schools on isolated sites with vehicular access only.

- c. Consider funding the Alamance-Burlington School System at a level equal to or greater than State averages as measured by *local per pupil funding*.
- d. Consider establishing *impact fees and special trust fund accounts* by area of the county to help pay for new school construction related to growth. (Also see Policy Section 11)
- e. Consider making *traffic access, management and circulation* a priority in developing and reviewing site plans for new schools. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle access.
- f. Consider funding *Alamance Community College* at levels necessary to keep pace with the demand for services, and to meet both short term as well as long term projections.
- g. Consider stepping up efforts to *involve the business community* in supporting the development and improvement of the Alamance-Burlington School System.

9. Solid Waste Management

- a. Consider increasing efforts to inform the public about the *disposal of tires and major appliances*, free of charge, at the County landfill.
- b. Consider increasing efforts to inform the public that the County will waive tipping fees at the landfill for property owners who act to *clean up dumpsites* that were created on their property without their knowledge or permission.
- c. Consider formalizing an *annual survey of tipping fees* in the region, with the objective of keeping Alamance County's fee's at levels comparable to other facilities. Use surpluses generated, at least in part, (1) to assist in the clean up of roadsides, and (2) to subsidize and offer appropriate incentives to private entities acting to clean up their properties.
- d. Consider conducting a study evaluating the feasibility and desirability of making the Alamance County Landfill a *regional facility*.
- e. Consider conducting a review, at least annually, exploring opportunities for *waste prevention, recycling and reuse*.
- f. Consider using zoning to site future landfills (LCD, C&D and municipal) so as to separate them from incompatible land uses. (Also consider nuisance zoning to prevent the possible proliferation of LCD and C&D landfills on inappropriate sites.)

10. Parks and Recreation

- a. Consider supporting the efforts of the YMCA to develop a new facility in partnership with the Alamance Regional Medical Center, and other area partners.
- b. Consider having the school administration develop formal policies and written agreements with local government recreation departments, including the County's, concerning the *joint use of the County's school facilities*.
- c. Consider authorizing the preparation of a *Master Parks and Recreation Plan*, to include a needs assessment, proposed locations for future parks, and estimates of funding needed for park development.
- d. Consider authorizing the preparation of a *Greenway Master Plan*, identifying (1) natural corridors such as streams and floodplains, and (2) man-made corridors such as utility and transportation rights-of-way and easements for incorporation into a greenway and trails system.

- e. Consider amending the County's subdivision regulations, as allowed by State law, to require *land dedication for open space and parks* in proportion to the size of the development or number of housing units being created. Provide for the collection of a *fee in lieu of land dedication* for the purpose of parkland acquisition.
- f. Consider an educational program increasing public awareness among property owners as to the tax benefits of donating *conservation easements*. Property owners along the Haw River corridor should be particularly targeted for this information.

11. Paying For Infrastructure and Services

- a. Consider avoiding actions that would contribute to the further development of Alamance County as a bedroom community for job centers in the Triad and Triangle areas. The pros and cons of actions concerning the property tax rate and development standards and fees, in particular, should be carefully evaluated.
- b. Consider avoiding tax policies which burden rural area and farming residents with responsibility for paying for schools, parks and other facilities required by new residents migrating into the county.
- c. Consider adopting development impact fees tied to new growth, and determined by the specific demand for schools and parks created by that new growth.
- d. Consider continuing to prepare and adopt a capital improvement program as part of the annual County budget process.

12. Air Quality

- a. Consider undertaking the full range of actions set forth in this plan related to *land use and urban infrastructure* that work to (1) reduce dependency on the automobile, (2) encourage mixed-use developments and (3) foster compact growth near job centers. See particularly implementation actions listed under sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8.
- b. Consider supporting the Triad Air Awareness Program in its efforts to promote voluntary individual and corporate actions to reduce harmful ozone levels in the Triad area.
- c. Consider the development and adoption of local ordinances to reduce air pollution, based upon Triad Air Awareness program tips.

13. Water Quality

- a. Consider using the County's *geographic information system (GIS)* to store and retrieve mapped information and data on wells, groundwater and pollution release sites. Use the system during the review of subdivision applications to prevent excessive drawdowns and to apprise landowners, buyers and residents of possible contamination.
- b. Consider adopting *water and sewer extension policies* that work with municipalities to direct new growth and development to locations where centralized water distribution and sewage collection lines are already in place.
- c. Consider periodically reviewing the effectiveness of County *watershed protection measures* to ensure reliable, healthy supplies of raw water for area water supply systems.

- d. Consider working with the state [NCDENR] on a *public education and outreach program* about the impacts of stormwater discharges on water bodies and to inform citizens of how to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.
- e. Consider continuing to require *land use practices that limit non-point source pollution* into area surface waters; specifically, the 50-foot buffer requirement along all year round streams and the 100-foot buffer requirement adjoining all water supply reservoirs.
- f. Consider continuing to lobby FEMA to update Alamance County's *official floodplain maps* at the earliest possible date.
- g. Consider preparing and maintaining a countywide *comprehensive drainage and flood management plan*, including public and private actions for plan implementation.
- h. Consider amending the Alamance County *subdivision ordinance* to incorporate specific guidelines and limitations concerning the impact of developments on downstream property owners and water quality.
- i. Consider preparing and adopting a local *stormwater management ordinance* to include specific design standards for new development.
- j. Consider *varying requirements for drainage facilities* according to the density of development. For example, for low-density development, require the use of vegetated swales. For higher density development, require the use of curb and gutter, combined with adequate stormwater collection and detention facilities.
- k. Consider strengthening the level of involvement by the County concerning stormwater management issues during development review, particularly as it affects water quality in area streams, lakes and reservoirs.
- l. Consider continued support for the Alamance Soil and Water Conservation District and the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service in assisting land users with best management practices to protect and improve water quality.

14. Economic Development

- a. Consider strengthening the role of the *City-County Association of Alamance County* beyond primarily maintaining open lines of communication among the local governments. Employ it to facilitate substantive agreements on selected issues ranging from water and sewer issues to matters of public health.
- b. Consider lobbying for a *reclassification of Alamance County from Tier 5 to Tier 4* under the tier designation system of the William S. Lee Act.
- c. Consider continuing efforts to recruit new industry to Alamance County that *diversifies the economic base* of the area, and creates less reliance on the traditional manufacturing sector.
- d. Consider strengthening support to promote Alamance County as a destination for *heritage tourism*, particularly involving the history and culture of the textile industry.
- e. Consider continued support for the promotion and use of the *Haw River Corridor* for paddle boating and recreational development.
- f. Consider giving equal weight to the *expansion of existing businesses, large or small* (in creating jobs and increasing the tax base) when awarding economic development incentive grants.

- g. Consider creating a major promotional campaign outside the region touting the *abundance of potable water* supplies available to businesses and homeowners in Alamance County.
- h. Consider supporting actions identified under policy section 8 above, (*Schools*) so as to make the Alamance-Burlington School System a major factor in promoting economic development and in improving the quality of life in the area.
- i. Consider zoning those parts of Alamance County that are experiencing the greatest development pressures. Use zoning to *create a better image* for the county in recruiting new businesses to the area.
- j. Consider increasing the use of *inter-local agreements and resolutions* on matters of critical importance to all local governments in Alamance County. (water and sewer, transportation, air quality, economic development incentives, etc.)

15. Public Safety

- a. Consider staffing and funding the Alamance County *Sheriff's Department* at levels comparable to the norm for other jurisdictions of roughly equal size and character.
- b. Consider directly lobbying the General Assembly to provide necessary funding to the Sheriff's Department to monitor *video poker machines*.
- c. Consider reexamining the County's *policy against overtime pay* for certain public safety personnel (e.g. Sheriff's deputies, Fire Marshall's office, and Central communications telecommunicators.)
- d. Consider reexamining the County's policy concerning the *purchase of vehicles* (new or used) for the Sheriff's office, with the purpose of evaluating the costs and benefits of each approach.
- e. Consider the purchase of 800 trunking *communications equipment*, or its equivalent, for the Sheriffs Department and for Central Communications-- to improve communications and information sharing within and between public safety agencies.
- f. Consider establishing two or more *satellite offices or substations* of the Sheriff's Department in the unincorporated areas north and south of the central urban corridor of the county, provided that personnel and financial resources allow.
- g. Consider staffing and funding the Alamance County *Emergency Medical Services* at levels comparable to the norm for other jurisdictions of roughly equal size and character.
- h. Consider supporting a promotional campaign advancing the public service rewards and friendships developed by volunteering for the *local fire department*.
- i. Consider the preparation of a plan for the designation and use of certain public buildings as *evacuation shelters* in the event of an emergency.

16. Health Care

- a. Consider continued support for *Healthy Alamance*, and the periodic community health assessment report which tracks key indicators of public health and offers an evaluation of changes for the better or worse.
- b. Consider appointing a task force to look into the success of the award winning, nationally acclaimed *BCMS (Buncombe County Medical Society) Project Access*, which has operated

successfully in the Ashville/Buncombe county area for several years. The purpose of the task force would be to examine Project Access for lessons learned and possible application of some or all of the project components in Alamance County. (Note: Healthy Alamance has under its umbrella a task force already in place devoted to Access to Healthcare Task Force issues; this would be a logical group to conduct the proposed examination.)

- c. Consider strengthening existing efforts to reduce *child asthma*, *child abuse* and *substance abuse* and to improve *health care access* and *other health problems* in Alamance County.
- d. Consider formalizing arrangements for health care services related to emergency situations, such as smallpox and smallpox vaccination clinics, and bioterrorism preparedness.
- e. Consider supporting initiatives, both locally and statewide, which would address other pressing health care issues, including: reducing tobacco consumption, improving access to dental care services, and counteracting the rapidly increasing problem of obesity in both children and adults.

17. Services to Senior Citizens

- a. Consider preparing a “white paper”, in cooperation with the NC Division of Aging and the PTCOG Area Agency on Aging, on the likely impact of a much larger senior citizen population on *County services* over the next twenty years, including particularly, social services, emergency medical services, Medicare and Medicaid, and recreation programming.
- b. Consider preparing a second “white paper”, in cooperation with the same agencies noted above, on the likely impact, over the next twenty years, of a much larger senior citizen population on *local service providers for the elderly* funded, in part, by Alamance County.
- c. Consider increasing services to the elderly in their home that promote independence such as Meals on Wheels, grocery delivery programs, medication assistance programs, and CAP services.
- d. Consider increasing services to the elderly that assist in maintaining their home, such as weatherization projects and home repair.
- e. Consider providing services to caregivers who are caring for elderly family members; such services might include respite programs and assistive items (e.g. walkers, canes, Ensure).
- f. Consider undertaking the full range of actions set forth in this plan related to *land use and urban infrastructure* that work to encourage development patterns and housing choices that allow for more cost-effective transportation options for senior citizens. (See particularly implementation actions listed under sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8.)

18. Community Appearance

- a. Consider establishing *tree preservation and planting* guidelines for voluntary compliance by both commercial and residential developments.
- b. Consider establishing *special standards and incentives* for development along certain highways or segments of highways that (1) are of particular importance to the image and appearance of Alamance County, and (2) can still be “saved”. Such standards might include, for example, special requirements for monument style signage, parking lot landscaping and exterior lighting.
- c. Consider establishing *minimum development standards for commercial development* anywhere in the county. Such development requirements might address for example, minimum acceptable

standards for signage, parking design, as well as some limited landscaping and buffering. (Also see actions under Policy Section 4 Commercial Development)

- d. Consider conducting a study concerning the location and design of *cell towers* in Alamance County. Prepare a report for the Planning Board, including recommendations, as appropriate, to address the issue.
- e. Consider adopting a *minimum housing code* requiring, in part, that substandard and dilapidated structures, including mobile homes, be properly removed and disposed of. Consider initially subsidizing such disposal as a near term incentive to facilitate action by owners. (Also see action under Policy Section 3)
- f. Consider passing an ordinance that requires proper *disposal or relocation of an existing mobile home* before the issuance of a permit for a new manufactured home on the same lot. (Also see action under Policy Section 3)
- g. Consider adopting a *junked car ordinance*, as authorized by State law, to require the removal of abandoned vehicles and junked cars within view of public rights of way.
- h. Consider amending the County's existing *junkyard ordinance* regulating the design and operation of commercial (i.e. income producing) junkyards. Correct problems and close loopholes that prevent proper enforcement against unlicensed junkyards.
- i. Consider supporting an educational effort to encourage *streamside landowners* to clean up their properties and to avoid dumping trash in the future.
- j. Consider becoming a local affiliate of *Keep America Beautiful* to increase public awareness of the littering problem and to improve the appearance of area streets, streams and properties.

19. Historic Preservation

- a. Consider supporting an educational effort to inform property owners of the *tax advantages* of improving and/or owning historic properties. (e.g. property tax deferral on preserved landmarks, federal and state tax credits for the costs of rehabilitating income producing historic properties, state tax credits for the costs of rehabilitating non-income producing properties.)
- b. Consider supporting continued improvements to the Cedarock Historical Farm, as well as other significant *historic and educational facilities* in the area.
- c. Consider supporting, with approval of the family, the designation of the *Scott family farm and home place* as a state historic site.
- d. Consider using the County's *geographic information system (GIS)* to store and retrieve mapped information and data on historic sites and properties anywhere in the area. Use the system during the review of subdivisions and other development applications to help preserve important historic resources.
- e. Consider supporting additional historical survey work as necessary to properly inventory and document important historic resources in the area.

20. Cultural Diversity/ Acceptance

- a. Consider continued support for Sheriff's Department efforts to achieve in-roads into the Latino community for the purposes of solving past crimes and preventing future ones.

- b. Consider continued support for School System efforts to recruit Spanish speaking teachers and counselors, as well as being responsive to the cultural differences of Latino children generally.
- c. Consider continued support for Communications Center efforts to be able to receive and respond to emergency calls from Spanish speaking persons.
- d. Consider continued support for Parks and Recreation Department efforts to respond to the recreational needs of the Latino community including, but not limited to, soccer fields.
- e. Consider appointing a joint task force of the County, the business community, and others to address the special needs of the rapidly growing Latino community. (e.g. day care, education, library/information needs, health care, housing, transportation, crime prevention, driving under the influence, distrust of government, and reading, writing, and speaking English)



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