

# Eastern Area Land Use Plan



A Joint Plan Between Cabarrus County and the Town of Mt. Pleasant  
June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Recommended by the Town of Mount Pleasant Planning and Zoning Board - October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2002

Adopted by the Mount Pleasant Town Board – November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Recommended by the Cabarrus County Planning and Zoning Commission – November 21, 2002

Adopted by the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners – June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003

## ***INTRODUCTION***

Planning tools and documents should be employed to promote orderly development to improve the quality of life for all persons presently living in an area, as well as for future residents. One such planning tool is the Area Plan. For many years, the eastern portion of Cabarrus County has been a rural community that was more or less apart from the more urban and suburban areas to the west. Development trends around Concord and Kannapolis over the past decade have made it necessary for the community to sit back and reassess its position. Twenty-five years ago, mostly farms and forests separated the eastern portion of the County from the County's urban and suburban areas. Now, however, only a few miles to the west of the planning area lies the city limits of Concord and Kannapolis and several newer development projects.

Like most growing areas, changes have taken place in the way people live, the way land is being developed and in the way the natural environment is being used. Simultaneously, however, conflicts are emerging between the use of land and its suitability for such uses, between rural and agricultural interests and those of land developers and between small-town and suburban lifestyles. Although no planning document can state in finite terms what is best for the community and how the community shall grow, this document briefly discusses the trends which have occurred in the past and presents a means of promoting growth and development in a rational and orderly manner. The primary objective of this land development plan is to address three questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

Many issues are raised when attempting to plan for the future of Mount Pleasant and Eastern Cabarrus County. Embedded in these issues are conflicts which are emerging and which will continue to surface as development occurs. In any growing community there is a legitimate debate over growth versus protection of the existing man-made and natural environments. Long time residents of a community often want conditions to remain the way they used to be years ago. Residents moving to a new community like to see the community retain the character and aesthetics as when they first moved there.

An adopted Area Plan does not by itself dictate what an area will become. Implementation of the plan and its recommendations is the key link needed to achieve the desired changes and improvements to meet the adopted goals. As the Town and surrounding area will not stagnate, neither should its planning efforts. To keep abreast of these changes, this plan should be updated periodically so that the needs and goals of the community are always kept in proper perspective. In turn, residents of the area as well as appointed and elected boards are responsible for acting on the recommendations of the plan.

## ***EASTERN AREA PLAN - BACKGROUND***

### **PREVIOUS PLANNING**

Prior to this planning effort, the Town of Mount Pleasant did not have a comprehensive land use plan. In 1992, the Eastern Area Plan and in 1993 the North Central Area Plan were adopted. These plans concentrated on the unincorporated areas of eastern Cabarrus County. This plan is intended to replace the 1992 Eastern Area Plan and the portion of the 1993 North Central Area Plan east of Irish Potato Road and serve as the first land use plan for Mount Pleasant.

## **HISTORY**

The Mount Pleasant area has a long rich history that begins prior to the Revolutionary War and marches proudly into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The area has come a long way from its days as a resting point along a commonly traveled corridor.

German settlers migrated from Pennsylvania to North Carolina prior to the Revolutionary War and throughout the years built several homes along a corridor referred to as Indian Trail in Cabarrus County. The trail was the common route to travel from Charles Town to Salisbury, both large towns at the time. At that time the Mount Pleasant area was known as the “comfort station.” Travelers would rest their horses and themselves in this area. The first officially recorded name of Mount Pleasant appeared in 1833 as Walker’s Store. It was named for the postmaster of the area, Daniel Walker. Two years later a new postmaster changed the community’s name to Mount Comfort, in reference to its status as “comfort station”. It is unclear how long this name was used, but around the late 1840’s seems to be the time when the name Mt. Pleasant first appears.

In 1852, a Lutheran college was established in the community. The college, Mt. Pleasant Collegiate Institute, provided military and good citizenship training. In 1850, a girl’s school was established. The Mont Amoena Female Seminary educated young ladies of North Carolina. Mount Pleasant was considered an education hub at the time. While the schools no longer exist, the Mt. Pleasant Collegiate Institute structure houses the Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society Museum.

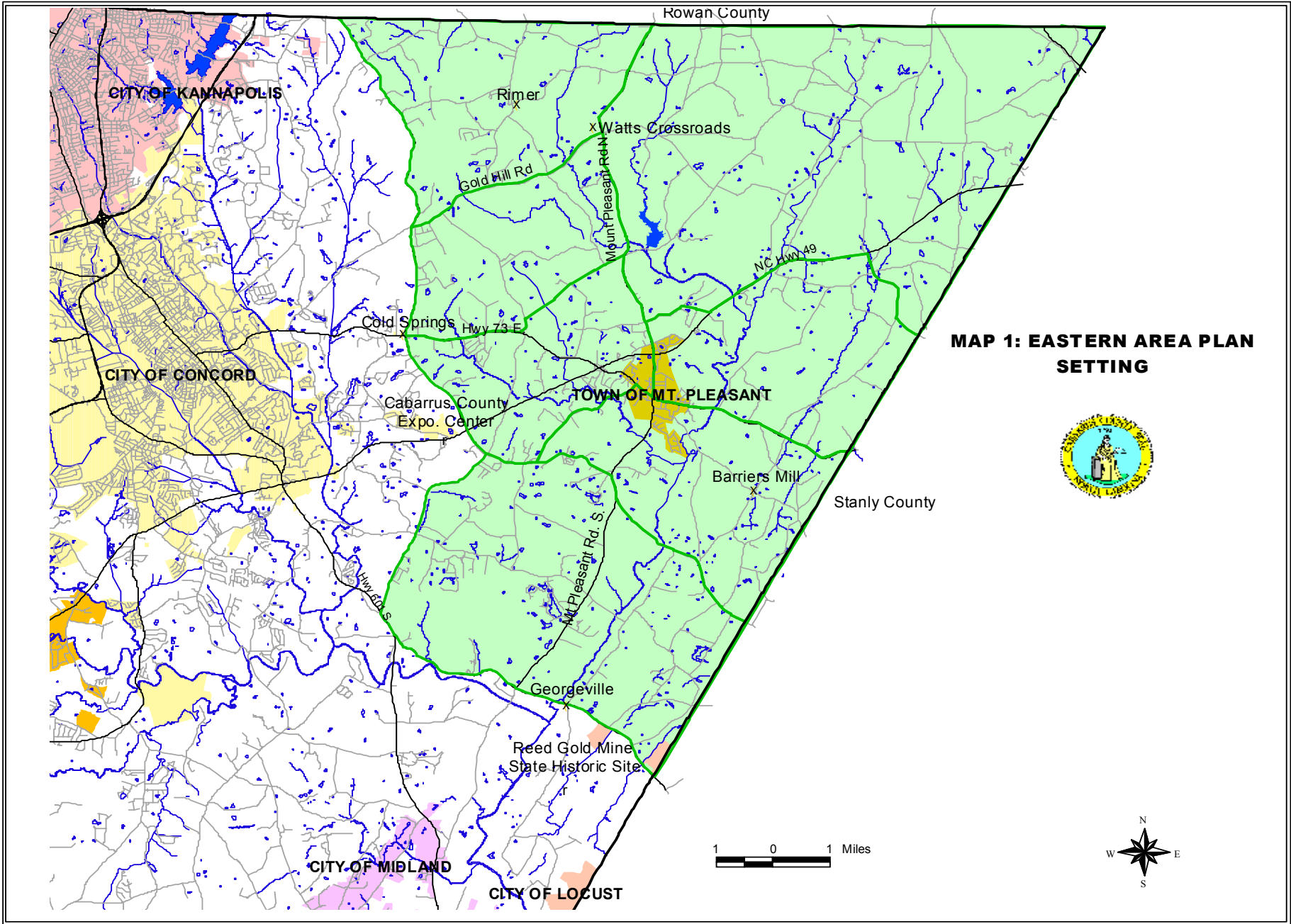
## **SETTING**

### *Eastern Cabarrus County*

Compared to more rapidly developing areas of the County, eastern Cabarrus County is a sparsely developed and predominately rural residential and agricultural area. The further east you travel in the planning area the more evident this becomes. Working farms, both small and large, are still an important land use in the area. Crops such as corn and soybeans and pastureland are evident when traveling through eastern Cabarrus County.

Several small, unincorporated communities are located in the planning area. They include Rimer, Watts Crossroads, Cold Springs, Georgeville and Barriers Mill. Two incorporated communities, Mount Pleasant and Locust are also within the planning area. Mount Pleasant serves as the activity hub for the planning area. While the majority of Locust is in Stanly County, the Town recently annexed a tract of land in the planning area along Highway 200 (See Map 1).

Zoning and subdivision regulations for areas outside of Mount Pleasant are adopted by the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners and administered by the Cabarrus County Planning and Zoning Board. The Cabarrus County Planning Services Division provides technical assistance to both boards.



### *Mount Pleasant*

Mount Pleasant is located eight miles east of the City of Concord by Highway 73, approximately twenty miles west of Albemarle along Highway 73, and approximately thirty-five miles northeast of Uptown Charlotte via Highway 49.

Highway 49 is the primary corridor for most traffic throughout eastern Cabarrus County as it is a primary north-south route between Charlotte and Asheboro. The two major arteries in the Town are Highway 73, which becomes Franklin Street in the Town limits and serves as the east-west corridor and Main Street which is the north-south corridor. These two roads carry the bulk of the commercial and residential traffic within Mount Pleasant and are venues to the fine historic properties found in the Town.

Mount Pleasant has subdivision and zoning authority inside the Town limits as well as in its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The town has an established Planning and Zoning Board that has the authority to make final decisions on applications for rezonings and subdivisions. The Town Council adopts the land development regulations for the Town of Mount Pleasant. The Cabarrus County Planning Services Division administers these regulations by an annual contract with the Town.



## **POPULATION AND HOUSING GROWTH**

### *Eastern Cabarrus County*

The eastern planning area, while not the fastest growing in the County, did have a significant rate of growth between 1990 and 2000. Overall the population in the eastern portion of the county increased by 20.4% or added just better than 2000 new residents. This rate of growth was higher than much of the core areas of Concord and Kannapolis. During the same time period, 886 new housing units were added to the planning area. This is an increase of 24.8%. The planning areas 1990 and 2000 population and housing figures are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Population and Housing Figures for Eastern Cabarrus County**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>
1990	9,926	3,731
2000	11,954	4,617

Unfortunately, the majority of population growth did not occur in areas with or planned to have public utility service. When examining the population growth by U.S. Census block groups, the Highway 73 and 49 corridors (block groups 3, 4, and 5) showed the lowest growth rates as illustrated by Map 2. According to the Water and Sewer Authority of Cabarrus County's 50-year master plan, investments in both water and wastewater infrastructure is planned in these corridors. The portion of block group 6 within the town limits is currently served by utilities. It had the highest rate of growth of all the block groups in the planning area. The Oldenburg subdivision is located in this block group. The remaining block groups (1, 2, and 7) also had high growth rates. These block groups are not within planned utility service areas as defined by the 50-year utility master plan and each of the municipal utility systems. Instead, these areas will depend on private well and septic systems.

What does the future hold for the Eastern Planning area? Table 2 presents population projections to 2015. These projections are based on the assumption that the rate of growth in Eastern Cabarrus County will continue at a steady rate. Additionally, the projections assume that adequate public facilities will continue to support this rate of growth. Higher or lower rates could occur under various scenarios. A higher rate of growth would be expected if water and or sewer utilities are provided in the study area. Presently, the WSACC 50 year master plan does not call for utility investment outside the Mount Pleasant area. A lower rate of growth would be expected with changes in land use policies or if local and state economic conditions do not continue to support growth in the housing stock

**Table 2 – Population Projections for Eastern Cabarrus County**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
2000	11,954
2005	13,173
2010	14,516
2015	15,997

### *Mount Pleasant*

Mount Pleasant encompasses approximately ten percent (10%) of the population in the planning area and has for the past decade. From 1990 to 2000 the Town experienced 22.6% growth in population and 16.5% growth in its housing stock. Table 3 illustrates past population and housing growth in Mount Pleasant.

When comparing the growth rates of Mount Pleasant with the western side of Cabarrus County, the rate may seem minor, in actuality the housing growth rate was fairly robust. The housing stock grew by 16.5% from 447 units in 1990 to 521 in 2000, based upon the 2000 Census. During this time Mount Pleasant also had a very low vacancy rate. The vacancy rates in 1990 were three percent for owner occupied units that were vacant and 6.3 % for vacant rental units. Several assumptions may be made by these numbers, one may be the fact that the Mount Pleasant housing market has become more diversified with the addition of several duplexes in the community. This form of affordable housing may have made it possible for renters to move into home ownership. Another conclusion may be that the decrease in industry in the Town may have resulted in the decrease of workers who may have been renters. In 1990, there were 2.3 persons per rental unit and 2.51 persons per an owner occupied unit. The 2000 Census indicates a slight reduction in persons per unit in rental housing at 2.25, but growth in persons per unit in owner occupied units at 2.66. The types of housing constructed recently may have influenced these changes in persons per household. Developments such as Oldenburg and Mountain Brook have increased growth in the size of persons per household for owner occupied, while construction of duplexes may have contributed to reducing the persons per rental unit in the ten-year period by converting renters into home owners.



**Table 3 - Population and Housing Figures for Mount Pleasant**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>
1990	1027	447
2000	1259	521

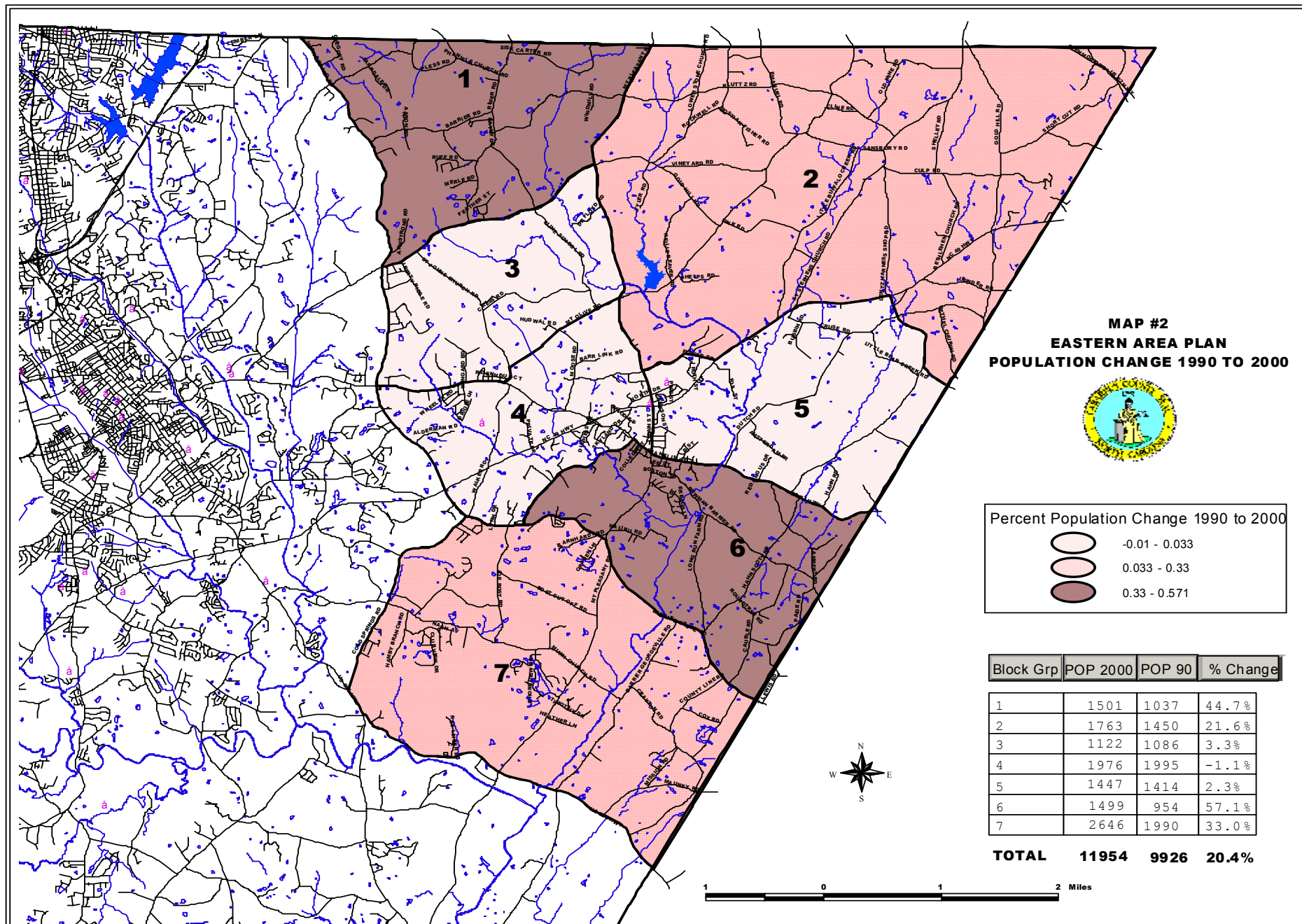
Several assumptions are made to arrive at the projections in Table 4. First, it assumes that the growth will occur at a constant rate. Second, it assumes that the economy will continue to support the current growth rate until 2015. Finally, it assumes that the necessary public services will be in place to continue to support the projected rate of growth. These are very general assumptions, as such the projections in Table 4 should be used cautiously as future population may be greater or less than these projections if the underlying assumptions change.

Known factors that may affect the projected growth in Mount Pleasant over the next fifteen years are the Albemarle-Concord waterline and the NC Highway 49 widening and improvements. In the late 1990's and early 2000's Mount Pleasant suffered some economic setbacks with the closing of mills in town reducing available employment. These factors could affect the projected residential and commercial growth in Mount Pleasant as well as the Eastern Area.

**Table 4 - Population Projections for Mount Pleasant**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
2000	1259
2005	1401
2010	1543
2015	1717

The following are some general demographic topics to summarize the existing statistics in the Town. Mount Pleasant's demographics show a fairly equal mix of female and male residences. Female residents constituted fifty-four percent of the population and males constituted forty-six percent of the population in the 1990 as well as the 2000 Census. Mount Pleasant's racial breakdown is as follows: White: 93.1% (1,172); Black: 5.9% (74); and Other: < 1% (13). The population of Whites has risen some since 1990 when it was approximately 90% and Blacks have dropped from about 10% in 1990. The median age in Mount Pleasant in 2000 is 37.8 years. The average family size in Mount Pleasant is 3.00 persons.





## **NATURAL FEATURES AND SOILS**

The northeastern region consists primarily of four types of soils: Enon-Mecklenburg-Poinexter, Badin-Tatum-Georgeville, Goldston-Badin, and Kirksey –Misenheimer-Badin. Each of these four soils share similar characteristics that support the vast farm and cropland usage in the area. These characteristics include grades that range from gently sloping to very steep; compositions that allow the soils to be well drained; and each has a clayey subsoil. Each of these soils also have their own limitations, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), such as slow permeability rates, high shrink-swell potential, erosion, and depth of bedrock. The slow permeability rate indicates that water travels slowly as it moves through saturated soils, this means that the land percolates slowly which is important information for properties using septic systems. The shrink-swell potential means that the soils tend to contract and expand over the course of time. This is an important factor when considering the building of roads, building foundations, and/or other structures that could suffer from cracks due to the movement of the soil. Erosion refers to the wearing away of the soil and is caused by many natural and man-made factors. The effects of erosion are most apparent along river and streambeds where the root base of trees is exposed because the soil has been stripped away by water. The depth of bedrock is important when considering how far down one must drill in order to install a well system or deep footings. The USDA Soil Survey of Cabarrus County indicates that the soil types that can support urban development best are those included in the Cecil and Hiwassee series which are subsets of the four soils mentioned previously, each of which can be found throughout the northeast region.

This region of Cabarrus County is dotted with many creeks and floodplains. The primary water features in the Rockwell area are the Second and Jennie Wolf Creeks. The Rimer and Watts Crossing areas include Dutch Buffalo, Jennie Wolf, Saw Mill, Black Run, and Little Buffalo Creeks. The Town of Mount Pleasant also includes Saw Mill, Dutch Buffalo, Little Buffalo Creeks as well as Adams, Little Bear and McAllister Creeks and Butcher Branch as it significant water features. Each of these creeks and branches create floodplains that should be protected from any developmental disturbances. Fortunately, Cabarrus County has adopted the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance that will regulate development along these floodplains. The Town of Mount Pleasant has also increased its developmental restrictions when it adopted the Unified Development Ordinance. It is important to protect these waterways and floodplains for water quality and environmental reasons and most importantly for storm water management.

## *EASTERN AREA PLAN – GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The area plan is designed to be a tool for the effective management of growth and development for the area. The plan is also designed to represent an overall concept of development and the pattern of growth and change desired in the planning area. This plan is to be used as a general guide for land use decisions made by County and Town staff as well as elected and appointed officials. As factors change this plan should be amended from time to time to reflect those changes.

This plan has been formulated through a cooperative effort between Cabarrus County, Mount Pleasant, and with considerable input from residents and community organizations in the planning area. The recommendations made in this document were forged from the input of residents who attended the various community meetings held in the planning area, existing plans applicable to the area, and other agencies who work with Mount Pleasant and Cabarrus County, such as NCDOT and WSACC.

Several assumptions were formulated while developing the future land use recommendations for Eastern Cabarrus County. These assumptions are (1) that future development be served by adequate public facilities, (2) that quality of life issues should not be compromised but improved, and (3) that plans for capital improvements will not be altered in a way that would accelerate growth in eastern Cabarrus County.

The discussion areas for this section are:

- **Land Use**
  - Agricultural and Open Space Preservation
  - Residential Development
  - Employment Uses
  - Mixed Use and Commercial Centers
  - Quality of Development
- **Infrastructure**
  - Transportation
  - Water and Sewer
- **Public Facilities**
  - Schools
  - Recreation

For each point above the discussion will provide a synopsis of current conditions, recommendations for the future, as well as justification for the recommendations. It is intended that this section, along with the future land use maps in Appendix A, be used when evaluating development proposals in the planning area and when making capital improvement plans and funding decisions. The future land use maps depict the general land use of the study area 10 to 20 years in the future. The text that follows serves as an explanation of the Future Land Use maps and how the land use pattern on the maps will occur.

## GENERAL GOALS

### *Eastern Cabarrus County*

This plan sets and makes recommendations for future development in the study area. The plan's vision for the area is expressed through the following goal statements:

- The Town of Mount Pleasant should continue to serve as the activity hub of Eastern Cabarrus County. Additionally, traditional crossroad communities should be encouraged to serve as community activity centers.
- Growth should be encouraged in areas that are served by adequate infrastructure and public facilities or in areas planned for new or expanded facilities and infrastructure.
- Direct the majority of new residential, commercial and employment development within the town limits of Mount Pleasant, its ETJ, and other locations defined by this area plan.
- Pay careful attention to development along the Highway 73, 52 and 49 corridors. The protection of future right-of-way requirements and preservation of their function as intrastate highways are important considerations.
- Preservation of the area's agricultural economy is important to the well being of the planning area and Cabarrus County.
- Existing employment areas should be preserved and future employment areas should be identified and reserved for future development.
- Focus new commercial development in mixed-use centers rather than in a strip pattern along the area's major highways and thoroughfares.
- Encourage development of alternative transportation to provide safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists within the Town of Mount Pleasant and surrounding area.
- Preserve the remaining historic structures and features within the planning area.

### **Open Space and Agricultural Land Preservation**

During various meetings held with eastern Cabarrus civic and community organizations it is clear that residents are concerned about the preservation of their agricultural heritage. Many residents are concerned that unmanaged growth will threaten the area's existing agricultural activities. The



major focus of this section is to explore and recommend strategies to manage growth in a way that permits development while protecting open space and agricultural land resources to ensure that the area's agricultural activities can continue to function.

Beyond the preservation of agricultural land and open space there is a fiscal consideration for managing growth in the eastern area.

Current research shows that the cost to provide services in agricultural areas is about one quarter the cost of providing services to the average priced single family home. In fact, research points out that agricultural land and open space in private ownership require approximately thirty three cents in services for each dollar in taxes paid while the average priced single family home requires more services than taxes paid<sup>1</sup>. Questions for residents of Cabarrus County to consider include:

- Is the public willing to pay for capital improvements in both the western and eastern portions of the County simultaneously?
- Is it feasible to extend water and sewer infrastructure, improve transportation facilities, and construct new public facilities such as schools and fire stations in the east while at the same time funding is required for these types of improvements in the western portion of the County?

During the community meetings several strategies and issues were introduced for discussion. The ideas explored include:

- Cluster development techniques
- Changes to permitted densities
- Defining Urban Service Areas
- Transfer and /or Purchase of Development Rights
- Taxation policies
- Changes to the development review process
- Voluntary Agricultural Districts

This section will explain these potential strategies and recommend a course of action for the planning area.

### **Cluster Development**

Cluster or Conservation development techniques are one tool commonly used to preserve open space. This technique sets a maximum density limitation rather than a minimum lot size for each development. In exchange for greater lot size and setback flexibility the developer agrees to preserve a percentage of the project area as permanent open space. The resulting open space may be used for recreational and/or agricultural purposes. Most cluster development standards require that at least 30 to 50 percent of the total project area be preserved as open space in order to qualify as a cluster development.

The concept of clustering development on smaller lots in exchange for the preservation of open space is being used successfully in several area communities including Cabarrus County. Both the County and Town zoning regulations include provisions for the approval of cluster subdivisions. While the use of cluster subdivision techniques is being used successfully in the suburbanizing portions of the County they have not been widely used in this area. The major reason is poor soil conditions and the absence of public utilities in the unincorporated portions of the planning area.

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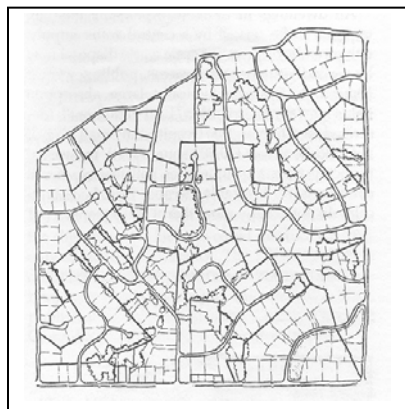
<sup>1</sup> Ellen Goodwin, American Farmland Trust  
[www.farmland.org/news/062700.htm](http://www.farmland.org/news/062700.htm)

Because the area is already zoned to permit a density of one unit per acre and soil conditions in the area require an acre or more for a private septic system there is no incentive to use the cluster development techniques available. At this time the only feasible means for a cluster subdivision to occur would be for the development to include the provision of a private package sewer facility in order to permit development on lots smaller than an acre. Either the provision of public utilities or the reduction of permitted residential densities would encourage the use of cluster development techniques in the planning area.

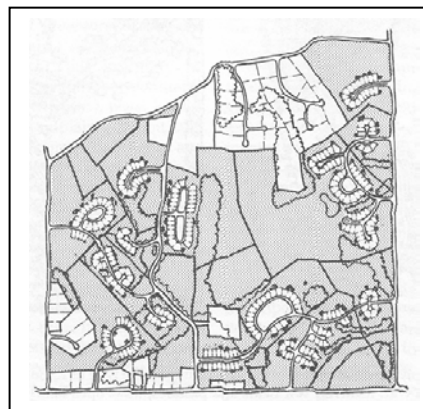
As discussed in a later section on water and sewer infrastructure, the Water and Sewer Authority of Cabarrus County's 50 year capital improvement plan for utilities does not call for utility investments outside the immediate Mount Pleasant area. As such the best available method to promote the use of cluster development techniques is to reduce densities in areas outside of the Mount Pleasant utility service area.

#### Recommendations:

- Continue to permit and encourage the use of cluster development techniques in the planning area.
- Require subdivisions of 10 or more lots to develop under the existing cluster development standards.
- Reduce residential densities to encourage the use of cluster development techniques.



Conventional Development Style



Development Using Cluster Technique

#### Density Limitations

A commonly used technique to preserve open space and agricultural land is to reduce permitted residential densities in conjunction with the requirement that new major subdivisions use cluster development techniques. While there is a perception that one acre lot sizes are a low-density development technique this development pattern does very little to protect agricultural land and/or open space. In reality, a subdivision of one-acre lots produces suburban levels of traffic, demands suburban services such as garbage pick up and regular police patrols, and requires suburban levels of public services and facilities such as schools and parks.

While the term low density will have different definitions depending on your location, it is widely accepted that one-acre zoning does not result in low-density development. In the western United

States 50 or more acres per lot is considered low density while in the eastern United States 5 to 10 acres per lot may more appropriately be considered low density. However, even at 5 or 10 acres per lot development will still fragment agricultural land. Hence the purpose of the cluster development requirements. Coupled with the cluster development techniques, lowering permissible densities is an efficient way to preserve open space and agricultural land.

In the various community meetings held in the planning area, the reduction of residential densities was a popular concept. While some felt that one unit per 10 acres was appropriate the majority felt that one unit per 5 acres was most feasible. To address the objections of participants that wanted greater flexibility to provide land to family members and/or wanted to earn some income off the sale of their land and for those with smaller lots who anticipated the ability to later divide their land, a compromise to a strict adherence to a one unit per 5 acre requirement was formulated.

**Recommendation:**

- That the following standards apply to the Agriculture and Open Space District as shown on the future land use map in Appendix A:

*The first 5 units be permitted at a rate of one unit per acre, the next 2 units be at a rate of one unit per 2.5 acres and the remaining units be at a rate of one unit per 5 acres. The minimum lot size would continue to be one acre for areas not served by a utility system operated by a governmental agency.*

**Defining Urban Service Areas**

Another tool that can assist in the preservation of agricultural land and open space is the designation of Urban Service Areas. The designation of Urban Service Areas gives both the public and private sectors a firm indication where public and private dollars should be invested in public infrastructure, particularly in regards to public water and sewer infrastructure.

In the various community meetings held during this planning process, participants expressed concern in regard to the provision of public utility service in the rural portions of the planning area. The vast majority of participants felt that public utility investments should not be made in areas outside the Town of Mount Pleasant ETJ. These residents felt that once utility service was provided the eastern portion of the County would develop rapidly. Residents were also concerned that if this portion of the County was opened to development the resulting rapid rate of growth would be fiscally unsustainable, putting a strain on already stretched public facilities and budgets.

In practice, defining Urban Service Areas leads to better land and infrastructure planning by reducing “leapfrog” development. “Leapfrog” develop occurs when infrastructure investments are made in outlying areas away from existing urban and suburban areas. This practice results in higher costs for road and utility improvements and also fragments agricultural areas straining the agricultural economy. By eliminating “leapfrog” development better fiscal planning for utility and road infrastructure and public facilities such as parks and schools is possible.

**Recommendation:**



- With adoption of the 50 year Water and Wastewater Master Plan, the Water and Sewer Authority and its member jurisdictions have defined where an Urban Service Area should be established. Map 3 presents the proposed Urban Service Area boundary. This boundary was set after discussions with WSACC, Mount Pleasant, Concord, Kannapolis, and area residents. The investment in public utility infrastructure should not be made outside of the designated Urban Service Area.
- Exceptions to the Urban Service Boundary should be permitted for health and public safety concerns (i.e. construct water lines in an area with contaminated well water).

### **Transfer / Purchase of Development Rights**

Ultimately the best way to ensure the protection of open space and agricultural land is to eliminate the potential for any development to occur by purchasing the right to develop land from a willing seller. There are two means by which development rights may be purchased. The first is by a government or non-profit agency and the other is by the private sector.

Non-profit and government involvement in the purchase of development rights began in the 1970's in the Eastern United States. It is seen as a less expensive way to protect open space than the outright purchase of a tract of land for three reasons. First, the cost to purchase development rights is typically less than the outright purchase of a tract of land. Second, since the land still belongs to a private citizen the costs associated with managing the land remain the responsibility of the landowner. Finally, since the tract is still in private ownership property tax on the agricultural value of the land are still paid.

The private sector can also be involved in the purchase of development rights. In this scenario the public sector permits a development company to purchase development rights in one area and transfer those units to another portion of their jurisdiction. This permits the developer to increase the permitted density for their project in a receiving area while at the same time protecting farmland and open space in a sending area.

It is important to state that either option is a purely market driven, voluntary method by which to preserve agricultural land and open space. Each option requires both a willing seller and a willing buyer. While the first option is already established through the existing area land trusts it could be even more successful. Around the region there is not a lack of willing sellers but a lack of funding to accommodate willing sellers. To date, there is not an example of the second option in the region.

### **Recommendations:**

1. As authorized by North Carolina General Statute 106.744, establish an advisory board to examine the establishment of and funding options for a purchase and/or transfer of development rights program in Cabarrus County.
2. Develop a Countywide Farmland Protection Plan in conformance with the requirements of 106.744 in order to obtain funding from the North Carolina Farmland Trust Fund. By developing such a plan the County would reduce its matching fund requirement from 30 percent to 15 percent.

## **Development Review Process**

During the public workshops it was made clear that residents were not satisfied with some of the development that had taken place in recent years. Specifically, residents felt that the larger subdivision projects that had taken place did not fit with their vision for Eastern Cabarrus County. The residents proposed solution is to require more public input for larger projects by requiring the issuance of a conditional use permit for proposed major subdivisions.

Items that residents felt should be addressed during the conditional use permit review process include:

1. Is the soil adequate to handle the proposed septic systems?
2. Are ground water levels adequate to handle the proposed private well systems?
3. Are public facilities such as school and fire adequate to serve the development?
4. Can the transportation system safely handle the increased traffic from the development?

In addition to the questions above, residents felt that any new major subdivision should provide buffers along the road frontage and that access to lots come from internal streets rather than being permitted driveway access to rural thoroughfares.

Recommendation:

- This plan recommends that subdivisions of 10 or more lots be required to obtain a conditional use permit prior to development. Specific review criteria should encompass the points of concern expressed by area residents as stated above.

## **Voluntary Agricultural Districts**

The establishment of voluntary agricultural districts was also discussed during the community meetings. Members of both the Cattleman's Association and the St. John's Grange mentioned the concept during the meetings. The Cabarrus County Agricultural Extension Office has been researching and developing recommendations for this option.

While this is a voluntary program the authorization of such can provide additional protections to those landowners choosing to form the agricultural district. First, it identifies landowners that may be willing to sell development rights and qualifies those areas for State grants for that purpose. In addition, the North Carolina State Statute authorizing the creation of the districts provide protection from nuisance suits filed by surrounding property owners when the property owner is conducting lawful farm operations.



While the authorizing legislation requires the formation of an Agricultural Advisory Board, this board could serve in the capacity discussed in the Purchase / Transfer of Development Rights section above.

Recommendation:

- Authorize the creation of a Farmland Preservation Program in Cabarrus County and establish an Agricultural Advisory Board to oversee the program. This board should also carry out the recommendations in the Purchase / Transfer of Development Rights section.

## ***RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The residential development of eastern Cabarrus County consists primarily of low-density residential developments. There are several manufactured home parks and subdivisions throughout the region as well as traditional, single-family developments. These density patterns have remained fairly consistent as the previous and existing subdivision and zoning regulations have maintained development at lower densities.

Mount Pleasant's housing market has remained unchanged over the past five to ten years. The most recent subdivisions have developed single family dwellings on lots between one-half to one acre. The more established residences located in the central portion of Town are typical for historic, or older homes with houses fronting along the street on narrow, but lengthy lots.

Mount Pleasant has set a precedent for diversity in housing with established apartment units and duplexes located near the downtown area. This has offered more housing choices to citizens as well as maintaining the more concentrated housing market in the downtown area.

Manufactured homes are seen throughout the eastern area with the highest number of parks off of major roads such as Highway 49, Highway 73, Rimer Road and Cold Springs Road. Only a few mobile homes are found within the Town. All mobile homes on individual lots are non-conforming with regard to the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

### **RECENT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Goals and Recommendations**

##### *Eastern Cabarrus County*

The majority of residential development in the unincorporated portions of the planning area occurs in minor subdivisions. From time to time owners of large tracts subdivide off a lot or two to generate income. Since 1995 there have been ten major subdivisions permitted in the planning area. Of those, two were in Mount Pleasant. The last large major subdivision approved was Osprey Lake. This subdivision included eighty lots with approximately one-third of the lots fronting on rural thoroughfares. This subdivision consists entirely of doublewide manufactured homes. Several workshop attendees expressed concern with this type of development in Eastern Cabarrus County. The concerns expressed included:

1. The project is too large for a rural community.
2. A lack of buffers along the road frontage detracts from the rural landscape.
3. Multiple driveways, spaced closely together, decrease safety on rural thoroughfares.
4. Soils in the area cannot handle the septic requirements for this size development.
5. The ground water is insufficient to handle this size development.

Residents also felt that there was not sufficient public participation in the review of this development project.

Site built, modular and manufactured housing are the predominate housing types in Eastern Cabarrus County. Since 2000, approximately two-thirds of new housing in the area are site built or modular and one-third are manufactured units.

Recommendations:

- A major goal for the planning area is to preserve both farmland and open space. The section on farmland and open space preservation recommends several strategies to accomplish that goal. Three specific recommendations are to reduce permitted residential densities, require the issuance of a conditional use permit for major subdivisions and to require that all subdivisions of 10 or more lots be designed in conformance with the cluster development standards in the Cabarrus County Zoning Ordinance. These recommended policies would address many of the concerns of area residents.

*Mount Pleasant*

The most recent residential development within the Town limits has been the construction of new duplexes near the Town's center. The most recent, and largest, subdivisions occurred between 1997 and 2000. Each are single-family developments and consist of lots approximately one-half acre in size.

Goals:

- A general goal for the Town of Mount Pleasant would be to continue to maintain a broad spectrum of housing alternatives in varying price point ranges. The higher density developments, such as apartments, condominium, townhomes, duplexes, and zero-lot line homes should remain within the Town's center and be encouraged to conform to the Town's existing ambiance in regard to height-width ratios, setbacks, and design. Some housing projects should be incorporated with light business and commercial uses to form mixed-use projects to coincide with the concentration of development existing in the Town's center.

Recommendations:

- Maintain the "small town" atmosphere by encouraging the development of new housing projects within, or adjacent to the current Town limits.
- New residential developments should be directed to areas currently served by public water and sewer. It is recommended that properties not directly accessible to existing utility infrastructure not be rezoned to a higher density until those facilities are made available.
- To permit the development of medium and higher density housing in the Mixed Residential, Town Center and Village Mixed-Use District's in order to maintain the Town's character and to allow for smooth transitions between commercial and residential districts and uses.
- Establish and maintain the historic district by incorporating an overlay district to protect the historic homes in Mount Pleasant.
- Maintain low-density developments (two units per acres or less) or cluster style neighborhoods within Mount Pleasant's extra-territorial jurisdiction in order to preserve open space and maintain an efficient use of the Town's infrastructure.
- Keep medium and higher density developments and infill projects focused around the Town Center.



- Rezone the area off Franklin Street and Halifax Court to allow for mixed uses.
- Add a condition to the zoning ordinance that would require a design review process for higher density housing projects that incorporate townhomes, condominiums, duplexes, and/or apartments.

# **MAP #3 EASTERN AREA PLAN SUBDIVISIONS**



ID#	Subdivision
1	Pleasant Meadows
2	Holly Ridge
3	Spud Valley
4	Osprey Lake
5	North Wood
6	Oldenburg
7	Fieldstone
8	Oak Leaf Condos
9	Walden Pond
10	Fair Oaks

## **Legend**

-  Town of Mt. Pleasant
-  Eastern Area Plan Boundary



\*Map is not to scale.



## Future Land Use Residential District Definitions

This area plan has several different categories of residential districts to accommodate a variety of housing needs, based upon what is feasible and compatible with the specific area. The categories are defined below and include recommendation of how new development should be addressed in each area.

1. **Historic Residential.** This category is a reflection of the single-family, historic homes in the heart of Mount Pleasant that have long since helped to establish the Town. The presence of these homes and the land on which they reside should not be diminished by new, incompatible development. It is recommended that new, or “infill”, development in this district be sensitive to the existing homes and be single-family in nature. The new homes should also maintain the same patterns defined by the existing homes in regard to setbacks, lot size, massing (height to width ratio of building), height, and overall design. Includes portions of the existing Residential Village (RV) District.
2. **Suburban Residential.** This district is the area plan’s single-family designation. The district is located both in the Town of Mount Pleasant and the extra-territorial jurisdiction. Housing densities of one (1) to four (4) units per acre are appropriate in the Suburban Residential district. It is recommended that the higher densities (three and four units per acre) be permitted in areas with access to existing public utility service. Areas without access to existing public utility infrastructure should develop at a density of one unit per acre. Once public investment in utility services is made then these areas may also develop at two to four units per acre. Developments in the Suburban Residential district should include park and open space in accordance with the Livable Community Blueprint, sidewalks, road connectivity with the existing and planned road network, garages that are recessed, detached, or oriented toward the side yard, and bike paths/lanes. This district includes portions of the existing Residential-Medium Density (RM-1) and Residential-Low Density (RL) Districts.
3. **Mixed Residential.** The area defined as “Mixed Residential” is located in between the Historic Residential District and the Suburban Residential District. The goal is to establish an alternative type of housing than those on the larger lots and keep high-density developments in the downtown area. This area provides for home sites ranging from five (5) units per acre and up. The Mixed Residential district will allow for single-family homes, stand-alone multi-family and/or attached single family housing projects. It is recommended that development in these districts be designed in consideration to the downtown area and emphasize walkability, integration of useable open space, connectivity, and appropriate street design. The recommended street design should be one that includes street yard landscaping, sidewalks and/or bike paths/lanes, limited building heights, and overall building designs that are urban in nature and integrate the idea of a “Town Center”. This district includes portions of the existing Residential Village (RV) and Residential-Medium Density Districts.
4. **Town Center.** This area will primarily consist of reuse of original buildings and infill development in the downtown area. This area may accommodate single-family, multi-family, and single-family attached. It is recommended that new sidewalk systems in future development projects be integrated into the existing sidewalk system established in the Town. It should also incorporate street trees and new structures should be oriented toward public streets, such as “row housing” utilizing the minimum setback. The design of infill development may be more urban in nature but should still reflect the massing, height, and overall design of the existing, significant historic structures in the area. This district includes portions of the existing Residential Village (RV) and the Center City (CC) Districts.
5. **Village Mixed-Use.** The purpose of this district is to provide a transitional area between solely residential uses and commercial uses. It is not meant for the development of stand-alone shopping centers or apartment complexes, but for development of light commercial uses (video store, dry cleaners, coffee shops, etc) and higher density residential uses. This area will permit a diversity of

housing types and densities within a mixed project that will offer, retail, office and employment uses as well as housing opportunities. This district may also accommodate single-family, multi-family, and single-family attached. It is recommended that the uses should be designed for the street and include the following:

- appropriate landscaping and street trees;
- sidewalks that are incorporated into the design of all streets, parking facilities and public spaces, and they should connect to building entrances;
- bike paths/lanes, on-street parking on internal roads, parking lots located internally and screened;
- pedestrian amenities such as benches and proper lighting;
- sidewalks that connect with the established pedestrian walkway system;
- open spaces that connect with other civic amenities and open spaces/parks; and
- overall building design that enhances the established historic residential and commercial areas.

Unconnected “pod” development that segregates the retail uses from adjacent residential uses is strongly discouraged. This Village Mixed Use District includes portions of the existing Residential Village (RV) and Residential-Medium Density District.



## ***EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL USES***

### **INTRODUCTION**

As other portions of Cabarrus County have developed, the eastern planning area has maintained its status as the agricultural focal point for Cabarrus County. The health of the County's agricultural economy and the success of those employed in the agricultural industry will depend on development decisions made by both government and individual property owners. Both agricultural and non-agricultural economies can successfully coexist if appropriate land use and infrastructure investment decisions are made. Without appropriate land and capital investment planning the traditional family farm in Cabarrus County will not survive.

Mount Pleasant has been a thriving community since its incorporation with a beautiful downtown and a viable textile and agricultural industry. Recent changes in the economy have altered that equilibrium. These changes now serve as a catalyst to examine how to protect and enhance the assets of Mount Pleasant as well as attracting new industry and enhancing the existing industrial base in the community.

### **FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

There are several economic opportunities in regards to future employment opportunities in the eastern planning area. They include the Town of Mount Pleasant, the Highway 49 area at the County's new Expo Center, The Highway 52 corridor and rail line in the northeast portion of the planning area, the encouragement of new home occupation opportunities, the enhancement of the areas agricultural economy, and the potential for new tourism opportunities associated with the Expo Center and the areas natural and historic assets. Below is a summary of each of these options and why they present the best opportunity for economic growth in the eastern area.

The Town of Mount Pleasant has served as the economic hub for the immediate area and textiles served as the cornerstone for the local industrial economy. Unfortunately, changes in the regional economy have impacted the local textile industry. Plant closings and layoffs in the Carolinas are common news. For the foreseeable future, the decline and restructuring of the textile industry will continue. The Town must now work to diversify its local economy and attract new employment opportunities to replace those lost in recent years.

Within the Town of Mount Pleasant the three most important economic development assets for industrial development are future highway improvements planned for NC 49 and US 52, the proposed construction of a water line along NC 49 carrying water from the Tuckertown reservoir in Albemarle to Concord, and future water and sewer utility improvements planned in the Town. Since accessibility and infrastructure are key elements that prospective industries search for when examining potential locations, these planned improvements will make the Town more attractive to potential industries.

The future land use map indicates the areas designated as future employment centers. This map will serve as a useful tool for the County and Town Planning and Zoning Boards when making rezoning determinations for proposed projects. The reasoning behind the placement of these districts included consideration of infrastructure accessibility, existing zoning, surrounding zoning districts and land use, and the impact that this type of land use may have on the existing facilities.

### **Goals and Recommendations**

General Goals:

- Work with Cabarrus County Economic Development to establish a forum to market the Town and surrounding area and what is available (land, buildings).
- Work with the Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau to generate possible tourist attractions (i.e. farmer's market or youth sports tournaments).
- Heavier industrial uses that may include outdoor storage in the Industrial and Future Employment Districts should be well buffered from the view of adjacent property owners.
- Analyze areas reserved for employment for future infrastructure needs and include in capital improvement projects.

#### Specific Goals:

- Reserve the intersection of Highway 49 and Highway 73 for a future employment center.
- Establish a tourism group or mercantile association to create a Town website and pamphlet to distribute at visitor and informational centers to promote the Town's proximity to the Speedway, the new Cabarrus County Convention and Exposition Center, Historic Gold Hill, and Reed Gold Mine.

#### Employment Areas

#### Recommendations:

1. **Highway 49 and Highway 73 Interchange:** Given the planned interchange improvements and existing uses, it is recommended that this area be preserved for an industrial or business park. The most appropriate corners for industrial uses appear to be the north and southwest corners. This is based upon the existing land use, its proximity to the highway and the separation from the Town by Highway 49.
  - The Town should ensure that appropriate infrastructure investments are made in this area to ensure its viability as an employment area.
  - This area serves as the western gateway to Mount Pleasant and as such it is recommended that an overlay district be created to guide the development of these parcels while preserving and enhancing the highway's status as a scenic byway. It is also recommended that a gateway initiative be implemented to create an entrance to the Town from this intersection to draw interest from those motorists traveling through Town.
  - Land for both the future employment and the commercial district should only be rezoned upon application by the landowner or their agent. The applicant should be encouraged to submit a special use rezoning application to ensure all uses and that each project's design are compatible with the surrounding area.
  - Uses should be well designed and carefully screened to maintain an attractive streetscape along both highways. (This section of Highway 49 is defined as a North Carolina Department of Transportation Scenic Byway.) Highway 49 should not become a strip of commercial and/or retail uses, but rather a well-designed corridor that does not counter the goals of the Town or the eastern area.
  - Clean light industrial uses, research facilities, professional office parks, or college/technical school campuses.
  - District is located along two major highways and should be accessed by internal street networks to minimize curb cuts.
2. **The Cabarrus County Expo Center and School Administration Center:** When completed, these facilities will employ and draw a critical mass of visitors to the area. The potential need for service

industries near the facility will be more apparent as the types of events attracted to the site is better known. For Mount Pleasant, these new facilities may spur the need for new lodging and restaurant facilities. In addition, the Mount Pleasant area, with its historic assets, could become an attraction visited by Expo patrons.

- Expo Center staff and the Convention and Visitors Bureau should promote the planning area as a destination and maintain a list of eating and lodging establishments available in the area as well as attractions for visitors (i.e. Reed Mine, Bost Grist Mill, etc.)
- The Town should produce a brochure that can be used at various events to promote Mount Pleasant and local businesses.

**3. The Local Agricultural Economy:** While this sector of the local economy is not as glamorous as the announcement of a new manufacturing plant, it can be a very important element. There are several agricultural success stories from around the country where family farms find a niche in the regional market. Many family farms have found success marketing products to local grocery stores and specialty restaurants. Many success stories are found when local farmers form cooperatives to market their products. While it goes beyond the scope of this plan to develop these strategies, our purpose is to point out that jobs can be created in the agricultural economy.

- As part of this plan's strategy to protect agricultural land, the County should work with area farmers to produce a countywide Farmland Protection Plan in conformance with the requirements in North Carolina State Statute 106.744. One of the requirements for a Farmland Protection Plan is to develop a strategy to market family farm products.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants to encourage individual producers of agricultural commodities to refine and market products. This program may help promote the local agricultural economy.
- An additional charge for the Agricultural Advisory Board, as recommended in previously, is to develop a marketing plan for locally produced agricultural products.

**4. Highway 52 Corridor:** Located in the Northeast portion of the planning area, this highway is planned for widening. Eventually, US 52 will be widened from I-85 in Salisbury to US 74 in Wadesboro. The first phase of this project will run from Albemarle south to Wadesboro. The second phase will run north from Albemarle to Salisbury. Given existing uses along this corridor, the portion in Cabarrus County should be reserved for industrial uses.

- Determine if an existing utility provider is willing to serve this area with utility service and/or examine the feasibility of providing utilities with wells and a modular wastewater treatment facility similar to the facility in use in Midland.
- Ensure that appropriate access management techniques are employed to ensure that the highway will function appropriately.
- Work with rail providers to serve this area with freight service and spur lines.

**5. Home Occupations:** In Cabarrus County the establishment of Home Occupations is encouraged. The present zoning ordinance recognizes two types of Home Occupations, traditional and rural home occupations. The rural home occupation is designed for use in the planning area. Its purpose is to permit the operation of businesses on larger properties that will not negatively impact the surrounding area. Unlike the traditional home occupation, the rural home occupation permits the use of accessory buildings, outside storage of materials, and a limited number of employees that do not live on the property. This is an excellent way for an individual to start a business with lower up front costs than in a more urban setting.

- Examine the home occupation section of the ordinance to ensure that it is functioning as intended.

## COMMERCIAL USES

The following recommendations reflect locations within Mount Pleasant that currently serve the community in a commercial capacity. The purpose of this section is to formally identify these areas and give recommendations of what types of uses are appropriate for each commercial center and how these uses should be developed within these areas to make each area unique and identifiable within the Town. The goal is to centrally locate commercial, office, and retail uses in distinct areas that are developed in a manner consistent with the character of the Town of Mount Pleasant. These areas are to consist of commercial uses at various intensities and scales and provide the community with daily services and goods but do not provide high-paying, long-term employment opportunities.

### Goals and Recommendations

#### General Goals:

- Encourage reuse of the original buildings in the Town Center for commercial and retail uses.
- Encourage new infill development and reconstruction of downtown properties to conform to the historic nature of the Town.

#### Specific Goals:

- Have an overlay district along Highways 49 and 73 to control the quality of development along these major access points.

### Commercial Areas

#### Recommendations:

1. **Highway 49 and Main Street:** This area is currently occupied with commercial, industrial, and institutional uses (i.e the Mount Pleasant Middle School). With its easy access to Highway 49 and its existing land uses, it is recommended that this area be enhanced as a neighborhood commercial hub.

- It is recommended that a gateway initiative be implemented to create an entrance to the Town from this intersection to draw interest from those motorists traveling through Town.
- This portion of Highway 49 is also defined as a scenic byway and serves as the northern gateway to Mount Pleasant. Development of a streetscape overlay district along Highway 49 would be a tool to manage the development of this intersection. This streetscape plan should include standards for architectural styles, materials, landscaping, setbacks, and screening of parking and trash receptacle areas.
- Uses should be well designed and carefully screened to maintain an attractive streetscape. Street trees, sidewalks, and screening walls should be used to create a feel that this is a neighborhood hub and not merely a corridor accessory to Highway 49. It is also recommended that new centers be





created with a lot of connectivity between uses to minimize the number of curb cuts along the highway.

- Shopping centers with grocery stores, banks, pharmacies, restaurants, and other light commercial and retail uses are recommended in this area.

2. **Main Street and Franklin Street:** This area is the central core of Mount Pleasant and the Eastern Area and is defined as the “Town Center District”. This is the most established commercial/retail/professional office area in this portion of the County and efforts should be made to maintain a consistent level of viability.

- It is recommended that infill in this area, or reuse of existing buildings, stay consistent with the character of the District in terms of heights, materials, signage, windows, setbacks, roofs, and streetscape.
- As it is important to advocate continued activity in this area, it is recommended that circulation throughout this District (vehicular and pedestrian) be evaluated to determine efficiency and safety. This review should also consider the feasibility of acquiring land and constructing a small public lot to serve this District.

3. **Cook Street:** This area is currently zoned Residential-Medium Density with the existing uses becoming “non-conforming” once the Town adopted the Unified Development Ordinance. This area currently houses several professional offices and the Mount Pleasant Library. These uses, and the design precedent set by the existing offices, are compatible uses for the area. It is recommended to encourage more professional offices in this area that are “suburban” in nature.

- Land should only be rezoned upon application by the land owner or their agent and the applicant should be encouraged to submit a special use rezoning application to ensure each project’s design and the proposed uses are compatible with the surrounding area.
- Uses should be “suburban” in nature and reflect the standard of the existing uses in setbacks, sidewalks, landscaping, design, signage, lighting, and materials.
- It is also recommended that there be connectivity between parking areas. Parking areas should primarily be located behind the buildings and/or screened from view by landscaping or a small screening wall made of complementary materials.



## ***TRANSPORTATION***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Efficient management of the transportation systems are a vital aspect to all communities and can be a predominate factor in regard to the quality of life the community provides for its citizens. The efficiency of a road network is a very important issue in guiding residents safely throughout the community, as well as navigating visitors and commerce through the area. While vehicular traffic is an important aspect to a community's transportation system, additional efforts should be made to insure safe routes for the pedestrian and the cyclist.

### **ROADS**

#### **Current Status**

The Town of Mount Pleasant and the rest of the planning area have two primary transportation routes, NC Highway 49 connecting it to Harrisburg/Charlotte and Asheboro and NC Highway 73 connecting the Town to Concord and Albemarle. Of the two routes, NC Highway 49 is the Town's major route. In addition, a very short segment of US Highway 52 runs through the northeast tip of Cabarrus County.

All three of these highways are planned for improvement during the next ten to fifteen years. Highway 49 will be the first facility improved through the planning area. It is part of the North Carolina intra-state system and will be widened from two to four lanes. The second phase of the Highway 49 widening project will directly affect Mount Pleasant and result in a five-lane urban cross section through the Town. The project to widen Highway 52 is currently going through the environmental review stage. Various community meetings have been held and an initial report with various route options has been published. Planning for the widening of Highway 73 is only in a conceptual stage. No formal work regarding the design or final route of this facility has begun.

The Town of Mount Pleasant has maintained a multi-modal transportation system throughout their community for many years through sidewalks as well as a road system network. The sidewalk system in Mount Pleasant is a welcoming feature to the Town and one that is a valuable asset to maintain and improve.

Many of the roads in the planning area are very narrow and residents feel they are not safe for high traffic levels. Clearly, if public utilities are placed into areas outside of Mount Pleasant, road improvements will need to be made.

#### ***Mount Pleasant and the Eastern Area***

#### **Recommendation:**

- When the planned improvements of Highways 49, 52 and 73 are completed the Eastern Planning Area will be more accessible for businesses and residents. While these improvements will bring many benefits they will also bring their own difficulties and challenges. These improvements may cause even more traffic congestion on existing roads, further delays at intersections, and potentially bring new development pressures. The Transportation Map (map 4) following this section displays the roads proposed beyond that of the planned improvements by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Table 5 lists recommended facilities and their proposed cross-section.

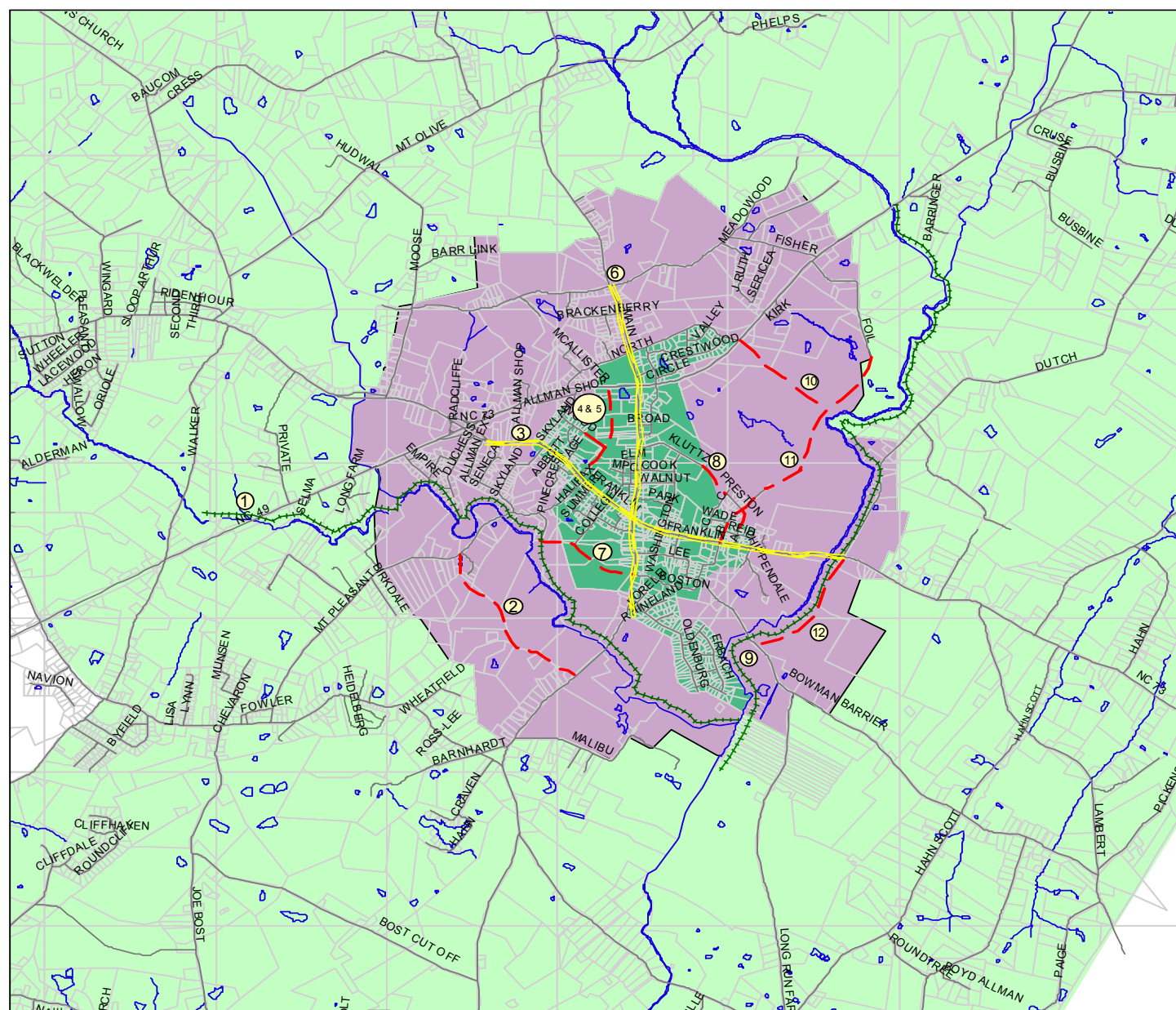
While these recommended facilities are important to the area, no formal voice to the State Board of Transportation is available to Mount Pleasant or this portion of the County. Without a formal voice in the funding process many of these projects will not be completed. Two options are available to advance transportation planning in the area, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPO). Both are transportation planning bodies established by the federal Inter-modal and Transportation Efficiency Act. While MPOs have long been established, RPOs were recently established and are just beginning to be formed. Because the Cabarrus – South Rowan MPO is an established transportation planning body located adjacent to the planning area, it is this plans recommendation that County and Mount Pleasant officials pursue membership in the Cabarrus South-Rowan MPO.

Most of the road facilities in this plan should be designed to accommodate bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In order to do so, it is also recommended that the Town of Mount Pleasant establish a bike route and sidewalk plan to compliment their existing efforts. Additionally, many of the primary roads throughout Mount Pleasant are wide enough, by NCDOT standards, to accommodate bike lanes. As these roads are repaved and stripped, it is recommended that bike lanes be stripped as well. This will provide an established travel land for those wishing to make short trips to the schools, downtown, or other areas of Town by bicycle. This improvement may be accomplished with minimal costs and will not only add to the amenities of the Town, but aid in slowing the traffic on those streets. By creating the appearance of narrowing these roads and the added stimulus of the cyclists, motorists will slow their speeds and increase their attention to the activity on the road. A more detailed discussion of bicycle and pedestrian transportation measures will be discussed further in this section.

# **MAP #4 EASTERN AREA PLAN MT. PLEASANT TRANSPORTATION**



1. East-West Greenway
2. Linkage of  
Mt Pleasant Rd W to  
Mt Pleasant Rd S
3. East-West Bike Lane
4. Proposed linkage of  
Wood Rd to Halifax St
5. Proposed Extension of  
Halifax St to Hwy 49
6. North-South Bike Lane
7. Linkage of Halifax St to  
Mt Pleasant Rd S
8. Extension of Kluttz St  
to Preston Dr
9. North-South Greenway
10. Extension of North Dr
11. Extension of B St
12. Linkage of Bowman  
Barrier Rd to Red Agnus Dr



0.7 0 0.7 1.4 2.1 Miles

**Table 5 – Proposed New Road Alignments**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Facility Names</b>	<b>Proposed ROW</b>	<b>Proposed Cross-section</b>	<b>Road Type Classification</b>
1	Rerouting of NC Highway 73	90	3 lanes with wide paved shoulder and bike lanes	Major Thoroughfare
2	Extension & improvement of Foil St to B St	70	2 lanes with turn lanes, wide paved shoulders, and bike lanes	Collector Street
3	Extension of Kluttz St to Preston St, as well as A Street to this new extension	60	2 lanes with and sidewalks and bike lanes	Residential Lane
4	Extension of Hahn Rd to Amsterdam Dr	70	2 lanes with wide paved shoulders and bike lanes	Residential Street
5	Extend North Drive across NC Hwy 49 to the new B Street extension	70	2 lanes with turn lanes, wide paved shoulders, bike lane and sidewalk	Collector Street
6	Extend Preston St to Kluttz St	60	2 lanes with and sidewalks and bike lanes	Residential Lane
7	Extend Halifax St To Highway 49	70	2 lanes with sidewalks and bike lanes	Residential Street
8	New Residential Street from Mt Pleasant Rd West to Mt Pleasant Rd S	70	2 lanes with turn lanes, wide paved shoulders, and bike lane	Residential Street
9	New Residential Lane from Skyland Dr to Halifax St extension	60	2 lanes with and sidewalks and bike lanes	Residential Lane

**Explanation of Classifications**

The Mount Pleasant Unified Development Ordinance, as well as the MPO's Transportation Plan provides the following definitions.

**Major Thoroughfare.** Serve as principle traffic-carriers throughout the urban area. Their primary function is to carry traffic, but they also may service abutting property. Too many property access points requires too many traffic signals. Too many traffic signals reduce the travel speeds, capacity, and efficiency of a thoroughfare.

**Minor Thoroughfare.** Serves to collect local traffic from the residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial districts, and collector streets and distributes the traffic to the major thoroughfare system. These streets also access abutting property more frequently than the major thoroughfare system. They cannot carry large volumes of traffic as well as the majors.

**Collector Street.** Streets accessing neighborhoods and routes serving intra-city rather than intra-state travel. A collector street may carry a minor amount of through traffic, but the system primarily carries local traffic.

## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION**

### **Current Status**

The Town of Mount Pleasant has always maintained a strong sidewalk system throughout the Town. This amenity has enhanced the Town's character as a small, friendly town where citizens interact with each other. The recently adopted Unified Development Ordinance now requires these types of improvements on all new development projects. The benefit of these requirements is that there is an existing system to connect to and in which to continue. As these new developments and streets occur, there may be instances of gaps, lack of connection between developments and projects along the thoroughfare and collector street systems. As such, it is recommended that a plan be established to determine how to fill those gaps in the transportation system.

Outside of the Town and ETJ sidewalks and bike lanes do not exist. Because of the nature of development in these areas sidewalks are not practical. However, the provision of shoulders on rural roads would enhance safety for both the motorist and bicyclists. As part of the Livable Community Blueprint, several roads were identified for bicycle routes. Roads along these routes should be improved with shoulders during planned NCDOT resurfacing projects. NCDOT and Cabarrus County have also identified several on-road routes that are currently suitable for bicycle traffic. These routes are in the process of being mapped. Signage of these routes will be provided as part of the project.

### **Goals and Recommendations**

Accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian travel lanes have gained more popularity and discussion since the surge of development, not only in Cabarrus County, but also around the State. With Neo-traditional projects serving as the latest trend of suburban development, sidewalks and bike lanes have become a point of interest for many homeowners and communities. The increased popularity is a result of efforts and interest in making areas more walkable, more community oriented, to give another safe option for transportation, and to reduce the negative impacts of vehicular traffic.

It is recommended that the Town reviews its existing streets and sidewalks to determine the opportunities for non-automobile travel and make improvements as projects occur. All new road projects and improvements to existing roads should be evaluated for the feasibility of bicycle and pedestrian improvements. To efficiently accomplish these tasks, it is recommended that a bicycle and pedestrian plan be written in conjunction with the greenway and bicycle routes suggested by the Livable Community Blueprint Plan. This plan has provided a "needs assessment" for all portions of the County and has given recommendations for establishment of greenways. A site specific bicycle and pedestrian plan that focuses on the Town of Mount Pleasant would provide a guide for new sidewalks, connections to be made between sidewalk segments, and establishment of bike lanes as roads are re-paved. The two documents, together, will make it possible for people to make both short and long trips by foot or on a bicycle.

The biggest challenge facing Mount Pleasant at this time in regards to pedestrian and bicycle transportation is in regard to Highway 49 and its scheduled widening. The Town will need to work very hard with NCDOT to come up with a feasible solution that will allow for safe passage across Highway 49 at Main Street. By accomplishing a safe way to cross Highway 49 from Main Street, several very positive effects will occur. First, it will provide a protected means for citizens to reach both schools on the north side of Town. Second, it will connect the residential area on the

north side with the rest of the Town located to the south of Highway 49. Third, it will make motorists aware that they are passing through a Town and encourage them to notice Mount Pleasant and slow down.

#### General Goals:

- Join the Metropolitan Planning Organization and work with NCDOT to identify current needs, future trends, and to program transportation facilities to improve mobility of people and goods.
- Work with both organizations to create a Thoroughfare Plan to outline how to mitigate existing problems and future needs on the transportation system to prevent roads from becoming over-capacity.
- Create a bicycle lane and sidewalk program to inventory all the existing resources and plan the placement of future bike lanes and sidewalk extensions.
- Develop and maintain a transportation system, which preserves and enhances the natural and built environments.
- Improve traffic signal timing and coordination at Main and Franklin Streets through intelligent transportation systems.
- Have an overlay district along highway 49 and 73 to control the quality of development along these major access points.
- Maintain “nodes” of commercial, retail, business uses so that they may share driveways in order to reduce the number of curb cuts along primary roads that would increase traffic congestion if not controlled.





## ***WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The provision of water and sewer within the plan area is an important consideration in analyzing past and projecting future development patterns. Both public utility systems and private well and septic systems are used to meet the water and wastewater needs of area residents. The Eastern Area Plan takes into consideration the improvements recommended in the Water and Sewer Authority of Cabarrus County's 50 year Master Plan as well as utility improvements planned by the Town of Mount Pleasant, the City of Concord, and the City of Kannapolis. The purpose of this section is to examine the effect these planned improvements may have on development patterns in the area. For specific details, it is best to refer to the Water Authority's Master Plan and the capital improvement plans of for each municipality. The plan also examines the role of private delivery systems and their role in the planning area.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The plan area consists of Townships 6, 7, and 8 and portions of Townships 5 and 9. Public water and sanitary sewer are currently available to most of the area within the town limits of Mount Pleasant and to land along the corridors of Highways 49 and 73 between Concord and Mount Pleasant (See Maps 5 & 6).

Two sources of water serve the Mount Pleasant area. They are Dutch Buffalo Creek and the Black Creek Run Reservoir. Both are protected by the Watershed Overlay Districts included in both the Cabarrus County Zoning Ordinance and the Town's Unified Development Ordinance.

The areas not within the service area for public water and sewer use private wells and septic systems. Based on data from the USGS, soils in the planning area are classified as having moderate to severe limitations for septic systems. In fact, the majority of the planning area is classified as having severe septic system limitations as shown on Map 7, denoted in light blue.

### **FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

The Town of Mount Pleasant recently received a State Revolving Loan and grants to upgrade existing utility infrastructure. The money will be used to replace decaying infrastructure in order to maintain the operability of the utility system. These monies will not be available for increasing system capacities. The City of Concord, in cooperation with other jurisdictions in the County, is in the process of exploring the feasibility and funding of capital improvements that will enable the purchase of water from the Tuckertown Water Treatment Plant, operated by the City of Albemarle. Should this project be feasible, approval from the State for an inter-basin transfer is required. The water lines required for this project would be constructed along the Highway 49 corridor through eastern Cabarrus County on its way to the City of Concord. The project is at least three to five years from completion.

Another project listed in the WSACC Water and Wastewater Master Plan that will have a future impact in the eastern planning area is a water line improvement along Irish Potato Road. The plan calls for an eight inch line in the year 2020.

In the WSACC Master Plan, wastewater capital improvements are limited to the Adams Creek Basin. These improvements are called for in 2010. No additional wastewater improvements are anticipated during the plans 50 year time horizon.

## **Major Issues**

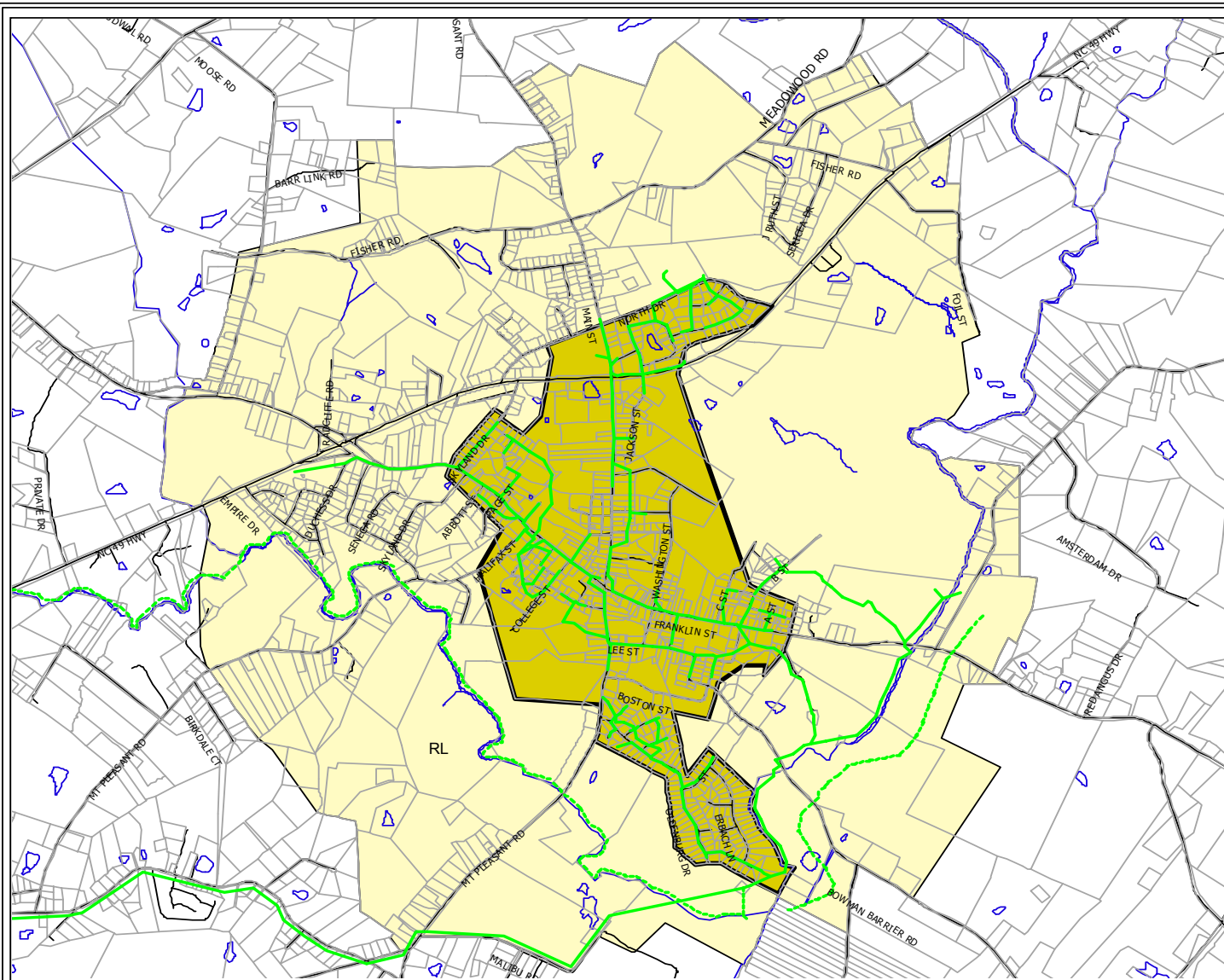
- Do not encourage private utility systems. Once annexed the property owners will not be the Town's utility service customers. Additionally these systems may not be built, maintained, and monitored to the same standard as public systems.
- Establish utility service policies for new developments
- Do not permit rezoning to higher densities unless they are able to connect with public utility lines.
- Have an established capital improvements plan so the Town always knows its infrastructure goals.
- Monitor ground water resources to ensure the sustainability of this vital resource.
- Ensure the long-term viability of area soils to absorb septic effluent.
- Monitor the location and frequency of septic systems failures in the planning area.

## **Utility Recommendations**

- Establish an Urban Service Boundary and adopt an inter-local agreement to recognize its establishment.
- Identify funds to expand Mount Pleasant's utility service capacity to complement the Town's economic development goals.
- Monitor the well and septic system failure rates and make policy changes when warranted.
- Direct residential growth to areas served by existing utility infrastructure prior to approving system expansions.
- Determine the feasibility of serving the US Highway 52 / Rail Corridor with utilities, either by contracting with an adjacent utility provider or with a community/modular system.



# **MAP #6** **EASTERN AREA PLAN** **EXISTING & PROPOSED** **SEWERLINES**



**Legend**

**Sewerline**

Existing

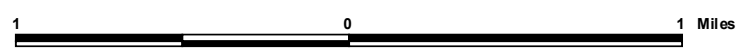
Proposed

**Etj**

Town of Mt. Pleasant

**Municipality**

Town of Mt. Pleasant



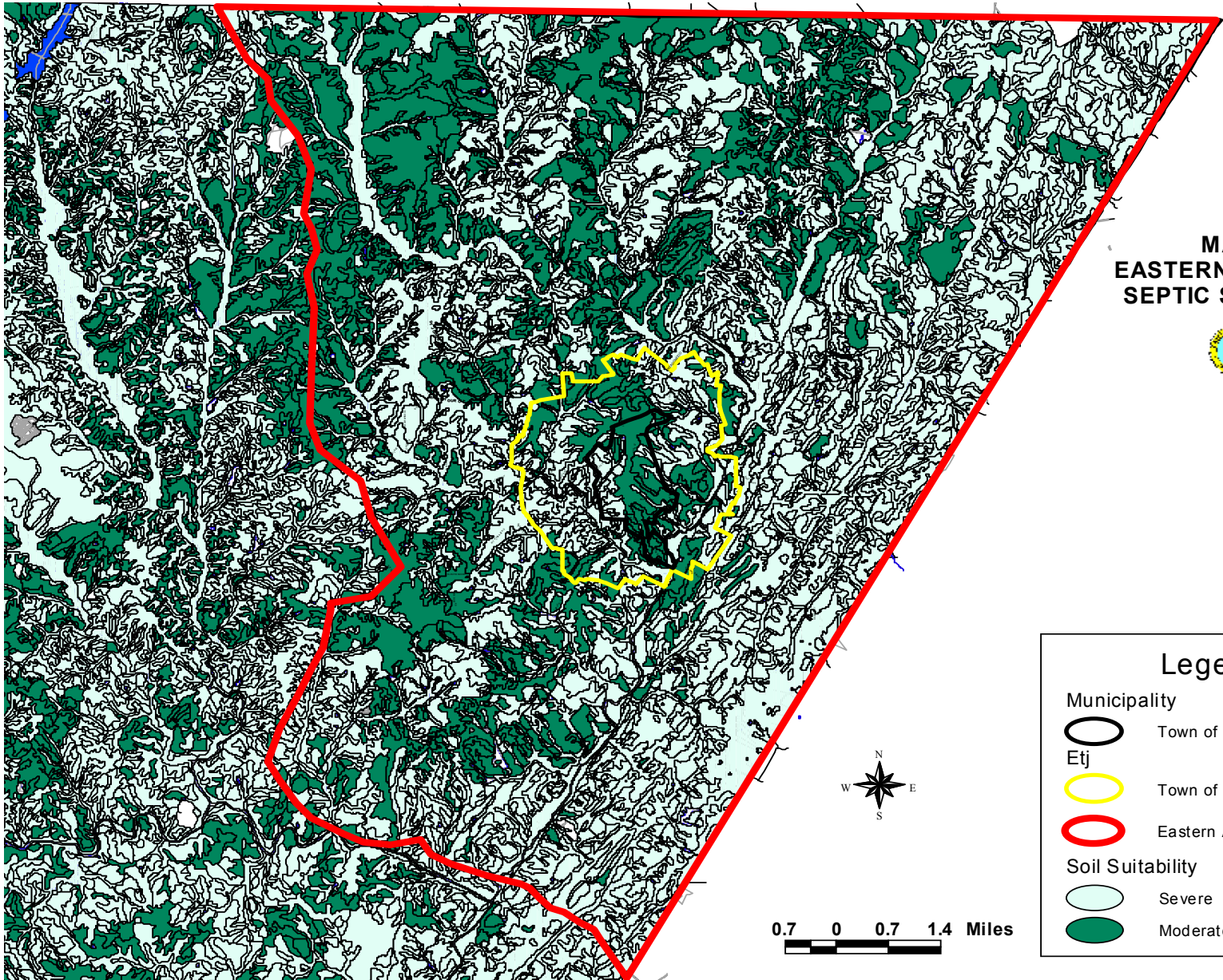
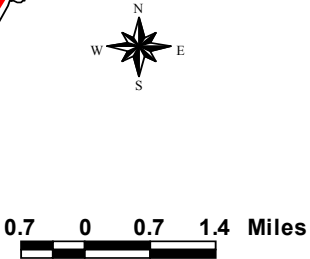


**MAP #7  
EASTERN AREA PLAN  
SEPTIC SUITABILITY**



**Legend**

- Municipality
- Town of Mt. Pleasant
  - Town of Mt. Pleasant
  - Eastern Area Plan Boundary
- Soil Suitability
- Severe
  - Moderate



## ***PUBLIC FACILITIES***

### **SCHOOLS**

The increased development in Cabarrus County prompted the Cabarrus County School District to develop the **Cabarrus County 15-Year Facility Plan** that outlines current school enrollment numbers, school population projections, and timelines for acquiring land and constructing new schools, replacing old schools, or expanding existing schools. It should be noted that the school's plan was based upon information and resources at the time of its adoption and will be amended from time to time as the need arises.



The table below contains results of this Facility Plan that included estimates that as of September 4, 2001 the schools in this area had the following populations:

**Table 6 – 2001 Student Populations**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Students</b>
Mount Pleasant Elementary School	905
Mount Pleasant Middle School	760
Mount Pleasant High School	954

The only facility improvement projected by the plan is a new instructional gym at Mount Pleasant High School. Because the school's facility plan does not project a need for new school facilities in the planning area this plan does not attempt to identify areas for future facilities.

### **LIBRARY**



The Mount Pleasant Library is located at 8556 Cook Street and is a tremendous asset to the northeast region. The Library was completed on August 26, 1996 and is home to over 5, 000 volumes. The Library serves over 200 patrons a day and is supported by fundraising activities sponsored by Friends of Mount Pleasant Library Incorporated. The Library also coordinates programs for the community as well as supplying

meeting facilities for any public, non-profit organization. The Mount Pleasant Library is a wonderful resource and supports residents and citizens across the northeast region. At this time the library is meeting the level of service required in this area.

### **RECREATION**

February 2002 marked the completion of a two-year long planning effort to develop **The Livable Community Blueprint for Cabarrus County**. The purpose of this document is to guide

Cabarrus County, and all its municipalities, in the development of parks and recreation facilities. As the Town continues to determine how to best address the needs of those in the community, this document will provide population and population projection data to assist the Town, the Mount Pleasant Recreation Commission and the Cabarrus County Parks and Recreation Department in making decisions and allocating funds.



The Blueprint also provided an inventory of all recreation facilities in Mount Pleasant and the surrounding unincorporated communities. Table 7 provides an inventory of current recreational facilities and includes how the parks were categorized in the Blueprint. A special purpose park is one that serves a single purpose. A neighborhood park is one that serves a primarily urban area and that provides multiple services. A quasi-public park is one that may be used by the public, but with restrictions such as that it must be reserved in advance for use and that is not owned by a government entity.

**Table 7 – Existing Park Inventory**

<b>PARK NAME</b>	<b>TYPE OF PARK</b>
McAllister Park	Special Purpose Park
Mount Pleasant School Parks*	Neighborhood Parks
Cabarrus County Boys and Girls Club	Quasi-Public Park

The Plan has many recommendations on how to serve the current and future needs of the area should be referred to for an accurate explanation of those recommendations and the recreational features included.

Since this plan has been completed several projects have become realities in the area. The Mount Pleasant Recreation Commission raised money to expand McAllister Park to include a playground, changing it from a Special Purpose Park to a Neighborhood Park, and completed a new town mini-park across from the Mount Pleasant Fire House that also includes playground equipment. Also the old Boy Scout building on the Town property is being renovated to be used as for multiple Town uses.

Additionally, the Unified Development Ordinance, as well as the Cabarrus County Zoning Ordinance, both requires recreational facilities in new developments if the projects are of a specific size. As such, this will ensure that these residences will supplied with some form of recreational asset close to their home. These assets may be in the form of greenways, picnic shelters, playgrounds, or number of recreation facilities.

#### Recommendations:

- Preserve future greenway corridors and parklands by requesting voluntary dedication to the public during the development review process, specifically at the time of final platting.

# **MAP #7 EASTERN AREA PLAN MT. PLEASANT PUBLIC FACILITIES**

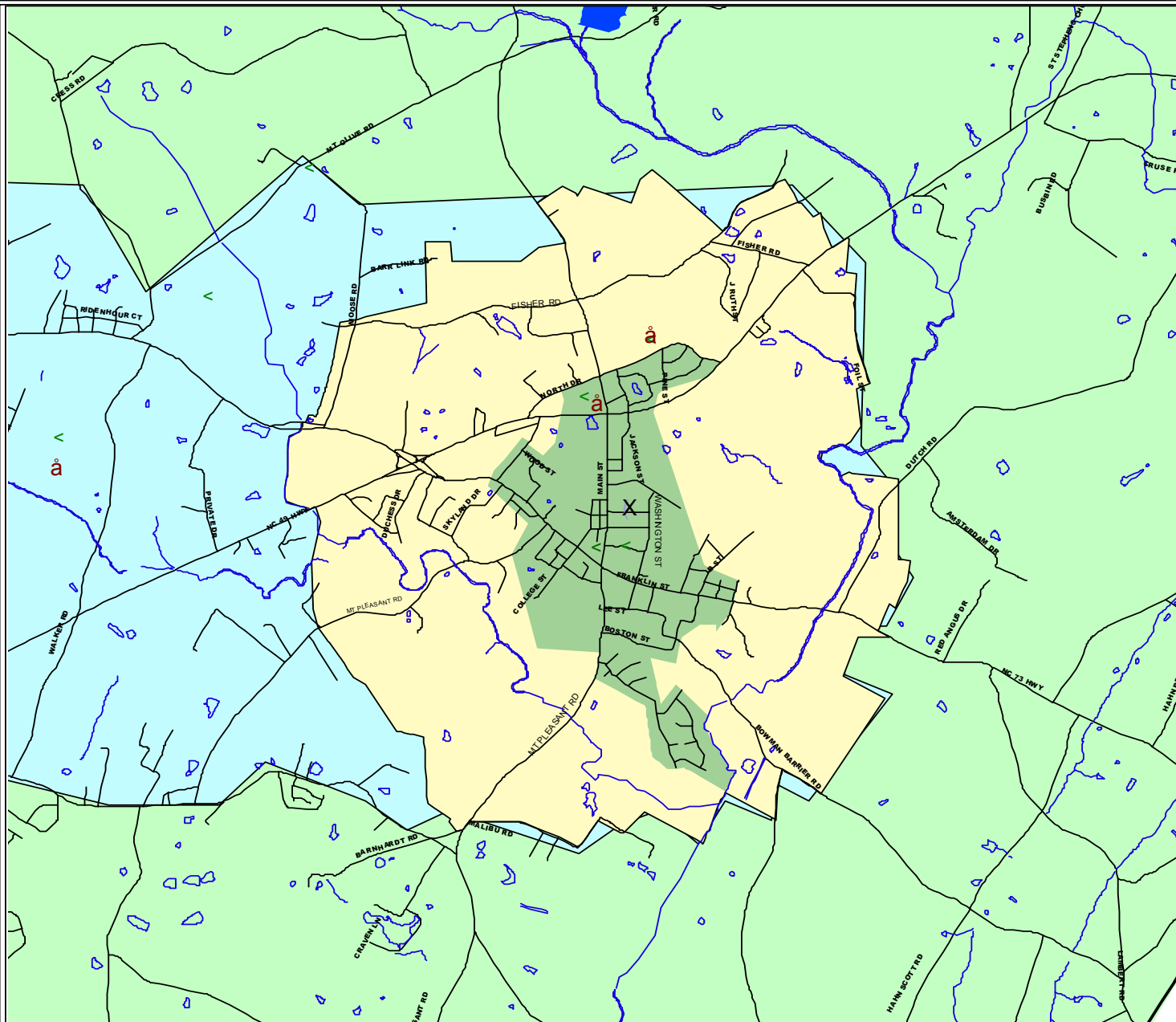


## **Legend**

- School Locations
- Parks
- Town of Mt. Pleasant
- Town of Mt. Pleasant ETJ
- Urban service area
- Eastern area plan boundary
- Library



0.8 0 0.8 1.6 Miles







## **Appendix A**














# **APPENDIX A - MAP #1 EASTERN AREA PLAN FUTURE LAND USE**

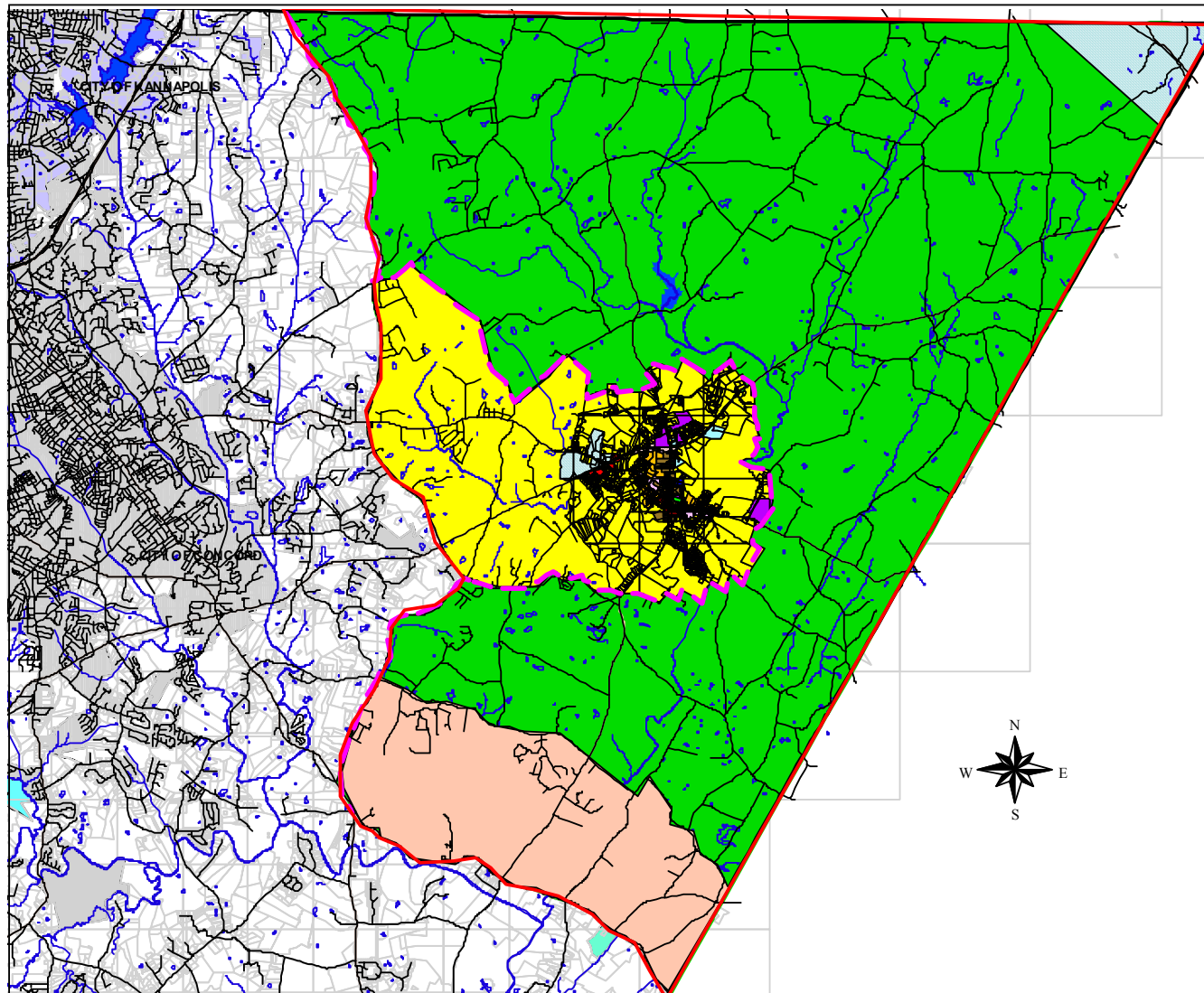


## **Legend**

-  Eastern Area Plan Boundary
-  Future Urban Service Boundary

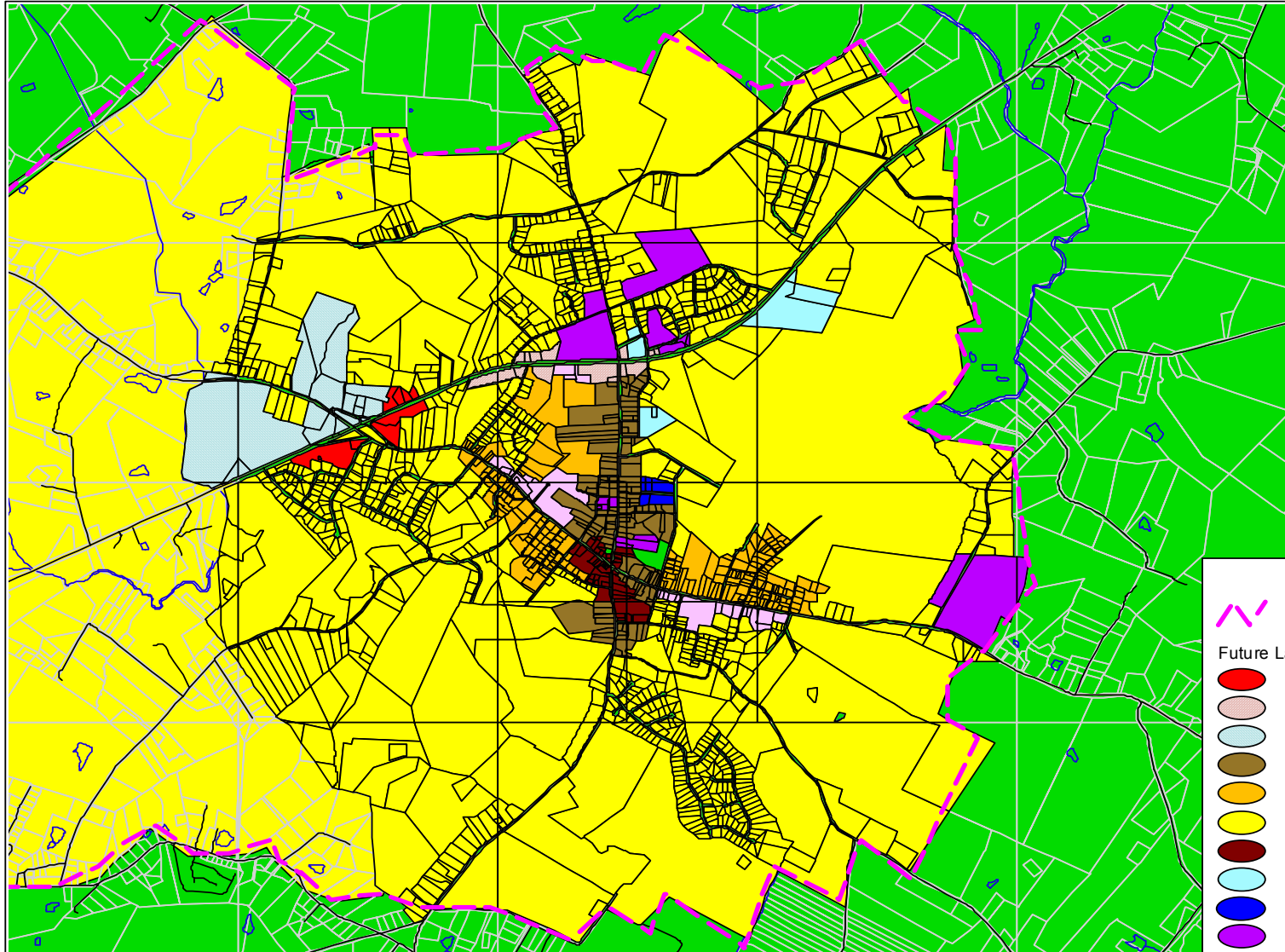
## **Future Landuse**

-  Commercial
-  Neighborhood Commercial
-  Future Employment
-  Historic Residential
-  Mixed Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Town Center
-  Industrial
-  Office/ Service
-  Institutional
-  Village Mixed Use
-  Agriculture/Open Space
-  Low Density Residential




0.8 0 0.8 1.6 2.4 3.2 Miles













**APPENDIX A MAP #2  
EASTERN AREA PLAN  
FUTURE LAND USE  
MT. PLEASANT**



**Legend**

 Future Urban Service Boundary

**Future Landuse**

-  Commercial
-  Neighborhood Commercial
-  Future Employment
-  Historic Residential
-  Mixed Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Town Center
-  Industrial
-  Office/ Service
-  Institutional
-  Village Mixed Use
-  Agriculture/Open Space



1 0 1 2 Miles

