

Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. The JPA would not be static, but would expand with each City annexation in accordance with procedures to be developed under the interlocal agreement. The JPA represents a major opportunity to the City and County to cooperate in planning the land use and future development

**Self Financing Bonds** - Self Financing Bonds is a planning and fiscal management tool that allows communities to finance infrastructure and land assembly costs using projected increases in property tax receipts. Typically, bonds are used in conjunction with a specific redevelopment plan intended to improve areas having substandard urban services or property ownership patterns which preclude private sector assembly for redevelopment or where existing development is in a state of dilapidation or blight and requires public investment to overcome these obstacles for better development. The self financing bonds technique, upon implementation, establishes a tax valuation “base level” and requires tax revenues in excess of this base level to be earmarked for use in improving these areas as designated in a specific improvement plan. Self financing bonds are used for a time certain, typically 20 years. At the conclusion of this time period,

tax revenue earmarking is removed and the increased tax receipts return to the City general fund. The State of North Carolina does not currently authorize this method of public financing. The City should strongly support project development financing when this development tool goes to NC voters in a 2004 referendum. This tool would be especially useful in neighborhoods like West End Clingman (WECAN) where significant public investment is necessary to correct deficiencies in public infrastructure pursuant to a redevelopment plan.

**Transfer of Development Rights** - One of the goals that the City of Asheville has set out for the future is to better preserve environmentally sensitive areas, critically-located open space, and small farms. A mechanism which has been successfully used in other parts of the country to preserve wetlands, farmland and open space is transfer of development rights (TDR). This approach allows the creation of ‘receiving zones’ and ‘donor zones’ whereby development rights (density) could be transferred from one zone to another, allowing an increased density in receiving zone areas where it is appropriate and allowing preservation of wetlands, open space or farmland in the donor



zone. The TDR technique would allow property owners to preserve their property rights while protecting the resource intended to be preserved. In Asheville, such an approach would allow preservation of critical ridgelines, open space and viewsheds, floodway and floodplain areas, and small local farms. The technique also has a great deal of applicability for preserving farmland and environmentally sensitive areas in the County and region that are being threatened by development; a cooperative regional approach might allow transfer development rights from areas in Buncombe County to areas in the City of Asheville that are more appropriate for urban development. The State of North Carolina does not currently authorize the TDR regulatory incentive. The City should pursue statutory authority for transfer of development rights.

**Land Value Taxation** - Land value taxation is a property tax appraisal and tax allocation tool that establishes a financial incentive for development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized property. Generally speaking, under a land value taxation approach, improvements to the land are taxed at a lower rate than the land itself. When communities implement a land value taxation approach, it is

usually set up to be revenue neutral with regard to total tax receipts; what happens under this approach is that landowners with fully developed property end up paying less property tax than they currently do and those with undeveloped or underdeveloped property end up paying more tax than they currently do. While there are no net increases in tax receipts to the local government under a revenue neutral land value taxation approach, the approach carries out a public policy by creating an incentive for property owners to develop their property or to redevelop their underutilized property. Such an approach has considerable merit for the City of Asheville given the extent to which the City's commercial corridors are underdeveloped (see Map 5, page 65) and the amount of vacant land in the City that is suitable for infill development. Such a program would have to be carefully tailored to coordinate with other efforts to preserve open space, environmentally sensitive areas and local farms. The State of North Carolina does not currently authorize this tax policy incentive. The City should further investigate the benefits of land value taxation, and, if deemed appropriate for our local situation, pursue statutory authority for land value taxation.



**Design Review** - Land use conflicts and concerns often come down to matters of design. People are less likely to oppose a duplex in their neighborhood if it looks like a single-family house; a well buffered commercial project that preserves an important stand of trees can gain the support of the surrounding neighborhood; a new home in an historic neighborhood will “fit in” if it is constructed in context with the neighborhood.

The City of Asheville has several techniques of incorporating design review in the development approval process. In our local historic districts, it is mandatory for most projects to receive consideration and approval by the Historic Resources Commission, a board that uses design guidelines to ascertain whether a project is compatible with the neighborhood in which it is located. In Downtown Asheville and some of the areas immediately surrounding it, the Downtown Commission reviews project for compliance with design guidelines; although this review is mandatory, compliance is voluntary. A similar process is used in the River District, with the River District Design Review Committee implementing a mandatory review/voluntary compliance design review

program. Map 6 (page 67) illustrates areas of the City that have a formal design review program.

In addition to these direct design review programs, the City implements design review indirectly through a variety of zoning techniques. Conditional use zoning allows a rezoning request to be tied to a specific development plan; design issues are frequently utilized to ensure that a rezoning is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood through this zoning tool. The conditional use permit process also incorporates opportunities for design review, especially in cases of large retail complexes that must meet a set of performance standards with regard to site and building design. The City also has a number of zoning overlay districts in which building size incentives are provided in exchange for improved site and building design. Finally, the City has specific design requirements in its various zoning districts; these requirements can range from fairly substantial (such as in the case of the urban village district in which design requirements are implemented through building placement, sidewalk width, parking location, minimum and maximum structure



height, and land use mixture requirements) to the setback and building height requirements of single-family residential zoning districts.

While zoning codes can be used effectively in addressing site design issues at the “macro” level (across an entire zoning district), and sometimes at the “micro” level (site specific) through the conditional use zoning or permit process, there is no current statutory authority for addressing structure design issues except in local historic districts. The mandatory review/voluntary compliance program used in Downtown and the River District, does not always work smoothly if an applicant is unwilling to implement design review suggestions for either site or structure. Additionally, most design review requires some sort of formal public hearing consideration, adding to the time it takes a developer to get his or her project approved. Obtaining statutory authority for mandatory design review regardless of whether the project was located in a local historic district could result in a more streamlined development review process where the design requirements were known upfront through codification in the City regulations. Such a program could minimize neighborhood

Map 6





Before - abandoned gas station on Montford Avenue; After - Viva Europe Cafe



Before - Manor Inn; After - Manor Inn remodeled into apartments



Before - abandoned home of Congressman Richard Pearson; During move - Preservation Society moves the home to a new location; After - Richmond Hill Inn



resistance to infill development while simultaneously expediting the development review process by ensuring that the requirements were known by the developer prior to the initiation of the development process and eliminating the need for board approval. The City of Asheville should explore statutory authority for mandatory design review, and if such authority is granted, the City should review its potential application to selected zoning districts and to specific areas of the City for which this development tool is determined appropriate.

**Adaptive Reuse** - Asheville has seen tremendous development activity over the last 100 years and, as result, has a wide variety of old and new buildings. This architectural diversity contributes significantly to the character of the City. However, some buildings are no longer appropriately situated to carry out their original function; the market for their particular use has changed or their location does not support the use for which they were originally built. Examples include a taxi stand on a predominantly residential street, an historic inn in a single-family neighborhood, and a mountaintop mansion accessed through a single-family neighborhood.

It is important to find new, compatible uses for these buildings if we are to preserve the architectural character of the community. In addition, if these buildings stand vacant and dilapidated, they promote neighborhood decline. In the examples listed above, the taxi stand became a neighborhood deli and grocery, the inn is a bed and breakfast, and the mountaintop mansion contains a corporate headquarters and offices. None of these uses could have occurred without some flexibility in the implementation of zoning and building codes. Fortunately, the City has a variety of methods for addressing adaptive reuse in its “regulatory toolbox.” In addition, recent changes to City regulations, such as conditional use zoning and the North Carolina version of the New Jersey rehabilitation code, provide new tools to promote adaptive reuse in these types of situations, while ensuring that neighborhood compatibility and public safety goals are met. Adaptive reuse, carefully applied, preserves architectural diversity and contributes to a healthy neighborhood.

**Infill Development** - Infill development offers another method for implementing the City’s Smart Growth vision. There are hundreds of

vacant properties scattered throughout the City and there are numerous developed properties that are ripe for redevelopment. When these properties are developed or redeveloped, this is referred to as infill development.

Map 5 (page 65) illustrates developed properties where the land value is greater than the improvement value. These are properties that have strong potential for redevelopment; in addition, these properties are not providing the “highest and best” use, thereby representing opportunities for enhancing the City tax base as well as supporting local economic development.

There is usually a reason why properties are vacant or underdeveloped in the City. These reasons include topographical or other physical problems with the property, prohibitive development costs under existing zoning (e.g., insufficient density to yield a return given the potential market for the property’s development), high demolition or other site preparation costs, suburban zoning requirements that do not maximize use of the property for urban

A common definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

## Commercial Area Redevelopment

1. Buildings are set back from the street. All parking is in front of building. No street trees and limited pedestrian amenities are provided.

2. Over time, redevelopment happens. New additions are added in front relating to the street. Street trees added as each building is renovated.

3. Streetscape is improved and pedestrian facilities are in place. Building renovations and expansions relocate to the street. Businesses have an opportunity to work together to share parking, encourage a shopping destination atmosphere, and more efficiently compete with larger developments and commercial nodes.



purposes, and lack of knowledge, financing, initiative or creativity on the part of the property owner concerning development or redevelopment alternatives.

The Smart Growth development pattern proposed in this comprehensive plan offers a variety of realistic, market-based alternatives to promote infill development of vacant property and redevelopment of underdeveloped property, particularly along major road corridors. These alternatives range from proposed urban villages locations to denser residential and commercial development templates; both of these development alternatives allow properties to be utilized to a greater potential than suburban zoning.

In addition to a general Smart Growth development pattern, opportunities must be provided for infill development on a case-by-case basis. Some properties may prove “resistant” to development or redevelopment even at the higher densities allowed under the Smart Growth pattern due to the underlying costs associated with site preparation or other factors. Other properties may not be located on or along the key corridors covered under the

Smart Growth pattern. Special regulatory tools, such as conditional use zoning, may be required to be used to encourage development of these properties. In addition, it may be necessary to educate the owners of the development potential of their properties. However it happens, effective promotion of infill development through property owner education and market-based regulatory solutions is absolutely essential in addressing the tax equity, tax base enhancement, and Smart Growth development goals of the City.

“Construction has an enormous impact on the natural environment. As builders, we want our impact to be as positive as possible. By building green, a builder can cost effectively produce a high-quality product and at the same time help to preserve life-supporting habitats for future generations.”

*Matt Kaylor, Building Contractor  
Craftsmen Unlimited, Inc.*

## Green Building

Buildings have a tremendous impact both on the people who inhabit them and on the natural environment. The impact on natural resources

starts with the development of the land itself and includes the use of raw materials for construction and the continuing use of resources for building operation. Buildings use one-quarter of all the world’s wood harvest and consume two-fifths of all material and energy flows. Building construction and operations account for 35 percent of U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 54 percent of total U.S. energy consumption.

Green building is a relatively new concept that has emerged in response to the growing concern for the sustainable use of resources with regard to the design and use of buildings. Green building is an integrated framework of design, construction, and operational practices that address the environmental, economic, and social impacts of buildings.

The green building concept encompasses a host of strategies that emphasize environmentally sensitive building practices that minimize or reduce the environmental impacts of building construction as well as the long term operational aspects associated with use of the building. Green building practices recognize the interdependence of the natural and built environments and seek to minimize the use of energy, water, and other natural resources and to provide a healthy, productive indoor environment. Green buildings also respect and are sensitive to the natural and cultural characteristics of their regions.

As Asheville continues to develop, it is increasingly important to promote strategies that will help to minimize the negative impacts of growth, such as degradation to air and water quality, natural resource depletion, and inefficient land use practices. The built environment represents a major opportunity for the City, along with local designers, engineers, developers, builders, lenders, appraisers, and other sectors of the building trades, to address local and global environmental concerns. Although misperceptions abound, the North Carolina Building Code does not prohibit the use of



alternative building materials or methods.

### **Benefits of Green Building**

- Helps to promote Asheville's Smart Growth and environmental policies including higher density, mixed use and transit-oriented development, redevelopment, increased bicycle and pedestrian access, and stormwater and erosion control.
- Provides long term affordability for owners and tenants who will save money through increased operation and maintenance efficiencies.
- Improves indoor air quality and the health, well-being, and productivity of occupants.
- Helps reduce public infrastructure costs related to development such as decreasing the demand on landfills, water supply, storm sewers, and roads.
- Conserves energy, water and other natural resources.
- Minimizes local ecological degradation (habitat, air, soil, and water) through efficient site and building design, sustainable construction practices, and low impact building materials and operational practices.
- Keeps money in the local economy and creates new local industries and jobs.

### **Henderson company building 'green' homes**

By Tim Reid, ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, March 24, 2002

HENDERSONVILLE — Glade Holdings Inc. opened in Hendersonville only four years ago but is already becoming a good-sized player in the area's booming residential housing market.

The company is building six residential developments totaling more than 300 homes, including the launch next month of its new "Earth Care Builder" program at Highland Golf Villas.

"Earth Care Builder is our version of the green building movement that is occurring across the country," said Mike Collins, Glade Holdings' director of sales and marketing. "It is a conscious effort to build homes that represent a better utilization of land and resources."

Glade Holdings took standards from green building programs in Texas and Atlanta and then developed its own approach, he said. Homes are sited for maximum energy efficiency and minimum impact on the environment.

"If we have to take out trees, we take out as few as possible, and we don't put them in a pile and burn them," Collins said. "We take the logs to sawmills, and the brush is ground into pellets for natural erosion prevention."

Homes are designed and built for maximum energy efficiency, he said, including things like placement of windows, sealing of wall and floor joints, using a sprayed insulation to avoid air gaps, etc. Indoor air quality is a major consideration in choosing construction materials.

Glade Holdings principals Gus Campano and Edmundo Hernandez had been successful real estate developers in Florida before they formed Glade Holdings in Hendersonville four years ago, Collins said.

The Earth Care Builder program will be incorporated in the Bedford Place development and all of the company's new developments in the future.

"We realize the necessity of conserving our natural resources," Campano said. "We want to leave a lasting, healthy environment for our future generations to be proud of."

## Green Building Practices and Techniques

### Design

- Smaller is better - A smaller well-constructed house lasts longer, uses fewer resources, and is more efficient to operate.
- Energy efficiency - Increase level of insulation, use high-performance windows, and tight construction.
- Renewable energy - Incorporate passive solar heating, natural light, and natural cooling mechanisms. Also consider solar water heating and photovoltaics.
- Optimize material use - Minimize waste by designing for standard ceiling heights and building dimensions. Simplify building geometry.
- Recycling - Provide for storage and processing of recyclables.
- Design for adaptability - Use more classic or timeless architectural styles for long term adaptability to other uses. Consider home office needs with layout and wiring.
- Design for durability - Use quality construction and materials for a long life.
- Incorporate roundabouts at roadway intersections - Roundabouts can eliminate traffic delays and reduce air pollution as well as

need for future road widening. They may also require less pervious surface and provide a center island for native plantings that help absorb stormwater.

### Land Use & Site Planning

- Reuse older buildings - Adaptive reuse of existing buildings is the most sustainable construction.
- Encourage in-fill and mixed-use development - Encourage the mixing of residential and commercial development to increase walkability and reduce automobile dependence.
- Minimize automobile dependence and design for multi-modal access - Locate buildings to provide access to public transportation, bicycle paths, and pedestrian access to basic services.
- Maximize site resources - Conduct a thoughtful site evaluation, including sun angle, soils, vegetation, water resources, important natural areas, etc., and let this information guide the design to make the best use of solar insulation, vegetation for natural cooling and wind protection.
- Locate development to minimize environmental impact - Identify environmentally



sensitive areas such as steep slopes, mature forests, intact native ecosystems and wetlands. Cluster buildings and minimize road construction to preserve these open spaces and wildlife habitats.

- Reduce impervious surfaces - Design landscapes to absorb stormwater instead of carrying it off-site in storm sewers. Some methods include the use of pervious surfaces for parking lot construction and the incorporation of grass swales, underground filtration and rain gardens, which are natural stormwater filters.
- Design water-efficient, low-maintenance landscaping - Landscape with drought-resistant native plants and perennial groundcovers versus conventional lawns that require irrigation, pesticide use, and generate air pollution from mowing.
- Protect trees and topsoil during sitework - Keep heavy equipment and supplies out of the root zone and avoid major grade changes during grading and construction by fencing off the “drip line” of trees.
- Avoid use of pesticides and other chemicals that may leach into the groundwater - Look into less toxic termite treatments, and keep exposed walls free from obstructions to

discourage insects. When backfilling a foundation or grading around a house, do not bury any construction debris.

### **Conservation of Resources and Materials**

- Use durable products and materials with low embodied energy - Try to use more natural and durable products that are not heavily manufactured thus saving energy on the manufacturing process and contributing less to the solid waste stream.
- Choose low-maintenance building materials - Try to select building materials that will require less maintenance (painting, re-treatment, waterproofing, etc.).
- Buy locally produced building materials - Look for locally produced materials, such as local hardwoods instead of tropical woods. This will save transportation impacts in both energy use and pollution generation.
- Use building products made from recycled materials - Building products made from recycled materials reduce solid waste problems, cut energy consumption in manufacturing, and save on natural resource use.
- Use salvaged building materials when possible - Use salvaged materials such as lumber, millwork, certain plumbing fixtures, and

hardware, but don't sacrifice energy efficiency or water efficiency by reusing old windows or toilets.

- Seek responsible wood supplies - Use lumber from independently certified well-managed forests. Avoid lumber products produced from old-growth timber unless they are certified.
- Minimize use of pressure-treated lumber - Use designs that will minimize soil contact and rot. Where possible, use alternatives such as recycled plastic lumber. Take measures to protect workers when cutting and handling pressure-treated wood. Scraps should never be incinerated.
- Minimize packaging waste - Avoid excessive packaging, such as plastic-wrapped plumbing fixtures or fasteners that aren't available in bulk.
- Use recycled materials for parking lots and other paved surfaces - Use recycled base and fill materials such as asphalt grindings, crushed concrete and gravel.

#### **Operational Efficiency**

- Install water-efficient equipment - Water-conserving toilets, showerheads, and faucets not only reduce water use, they also reduce

demand on septic systems or sewage treatment plants. Reducing hot water use also saves energy.

- Install high-efficiency lights and appliances - Fluorescent lighting has improved dramatically in recent years and is now suitable for home use. High-efficiency appliances offer both economic and environmental advantages over their conventional counterparts.
- Install high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment - Well-designed high-efficiency furnaces, boilers, and air conditioners not only save money, but also produce less pollution during operation.
- Look into the feasibility of graywater for irrigation. Water from sinks, showers, or clothes washers (graywater) can be recycled for watering plants.
- Incorporate Access Management measures into the transportation system - This is safer for drivers, and will reserve highway capacity as well as decrease delay, which helps to improve air quality.

#### **Indoor Environmental Quality**

- Avoid materials that will create indoor pollutants - Solvent-based finishes, adhesives, carpeting, particleboard, and many



other building products release formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air. These chemicals can affect workers' and occupants' health as well as contribute to smog and ground-level ozone pollution outside.

- Install mechanical ventilation equipment - Mechanical ventilation is usually required to ensure safe, healthy indoor air. Heat recovery ventilators should be considered in cold climates because of energy savings, but simpler, less expensive exhaust-only ventilation systems are also adequate.
- Avoid potential health hazards such as radon, mold, pesticides - Follow recommended practices to minimize radon entry into the building and provide for future mitigation if necessary. Use designs that will avoid moisture problems, which could cause mold and mildew growth. Design insect-resistant detailing that will require minimal use of pesticides.
- Avoid ozone-depleting chemicals in mechanical equipment and insulation, CFC's have been phased out, but their primary replacements – HCFC's also damage the ozone layer and should be avoided where possible. Reclaim CFC's when servicing or

disposing of equipment.

### **LEED Program**

The US Green Building Council (USGBC) was formed in 1993 to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work by accelerating the adoption of green building practices, technologies, policies, and standards. USGBC membership consists of more than 400 organizations including product manufacturers, environmental non-profit organizations, building and design professionals, building owners, and local and state governments. The USGBC is endeavoring to move the green building industry forward with market-based solutions.

The Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (or LEED) Green Building Rating System is a priority program of the US Green Building Council. LEED is a third party certification system designed for rating new and existing commercial, institutional, and high-rise residential buildings. LEED is based on accepted energy and environmental principles and strikes a balance between known effective

practices and emerging concepts. It is a feature-oriented system where credits are earned for satisfying various criteria. Different levels of green building certification are awarded based on the total credits earned. The system is designed to be comprehensive in scope, yet simple in operation.

The LEED system evaluates environmental performance from a “whole building” perspective, over a building’s life cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a “green building”. The whole-building approach encourages and guides a collaborative, integrated design and construction process that optimizes environmental and economic factors.

*The Four R’s of Green Building*

- Reduce - Design to minimize the use of energy and raw materials
- Reuse - Reuse materials when practical and structurally sound
- Renewable - Utilize energy and materials from renewable sources
- Recycle - Use recycled materials and design home/office for recycling



## Historic Preservation

Historic resources are the tangible reminders that establish social continuity through their links to the past. They give Asheville its sense of place, community, and spirit, and provide it distinction while contributing to the variety of the built environment. These resources include buildings, districts or groups of buildings, structures, objects, historic, and prehistoric sites. Over time, these vestiges of the past acquire a symbolic value in a community that sets Asheville apart from other locations.

Historic resources must be identified and evaluated if they are to be protected. Those



that are judged significant deserve private and public consideration and effort to insure their preservation. The fundamental purpose of any preservation program, particularly the historic preservation element of a local comprehensive plan, is to promote the protection of historic resources that are considered important to the community by responsible authorities and property owners.

Established in 1979, the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe (HRC) is specifically mandated to recommend designation of local historic districts and properties and to administer design review of new construction or rehabilitation within these districts and properties. Providing technical assistance and helping to educate the community concerning the merits of historical preservation are additional duties the HRC is required to perform.

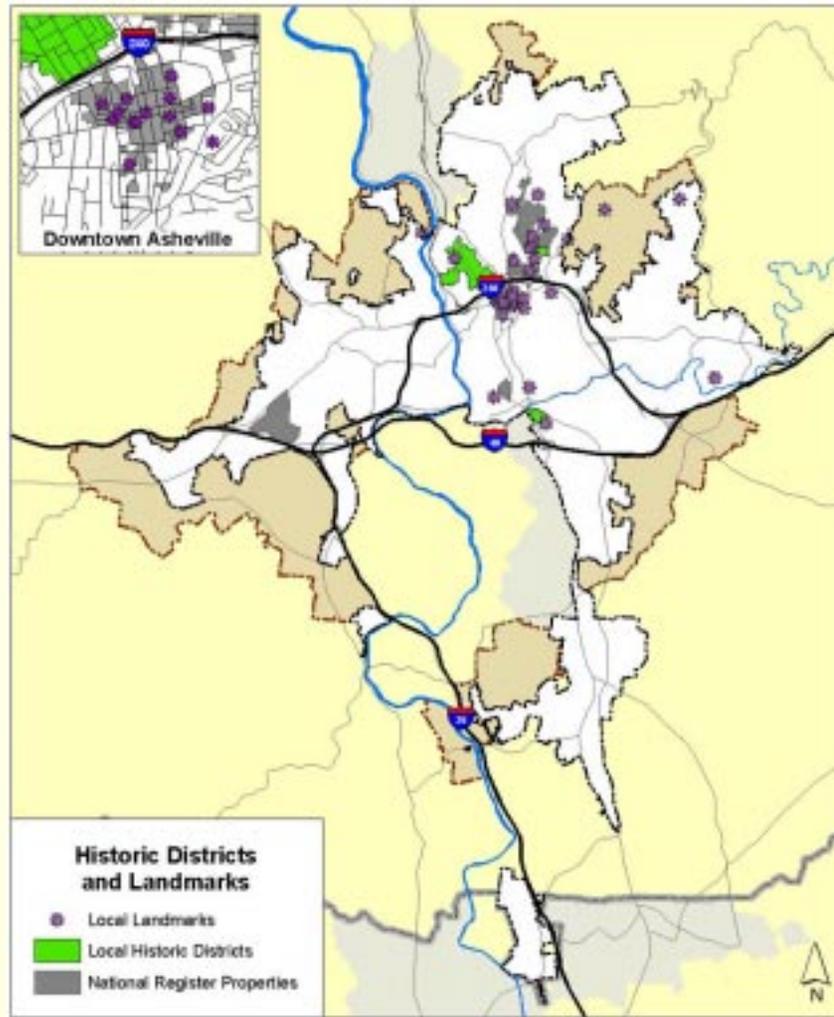
Since 1979, based on recommendations from the HRC the Asheville City Council has desig-

*“History is a journey without end. And the heritage we leave for the future will depend on how we deal with it now.”*

*Ada Louise Huxtable*



Map 8



nated 37 local historic landmarks and three local historic districts, Montford (1980), Biltmore Village (1987), and Albemarle Park (1988). Several additional designated properties are located in Buncombe County. Asheville is home to 43 individual listings in the National Register of Historic Places and six National Register Historic Districts including: Montford (1977), Downtown Asheville (1979), Biltmore Village Multiple Resource District (1979), Chestnut Hill (1983), Grove Park (1989) and Kimberly Amendment to the Grove Park Historic District (1990). (See Historic Districts and Landmarks Map.) Properties listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or located within National Register Historic Districts, may be eligible for federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits. Locally designated historic landmarks are eligible for a 50% deferment in local property taxes as long as the historic integrity of the structure is maintained.

### Historic Preservation's Relationship to Smart Growth

Identifying and preserving the existing built environment represents a relatively insignifi-

cant percentage of preservation activities today. Historic preservation has moved to a multifaceted group of activities that uses our built heritage as a means for revitalization, neighborhood stabilization, attraction for tourism, job creation, film industry production, affordable housing, luxury housing, education, transportation, and others. The spin-off from all this activity includes job creation, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, improved community appearance, and greater community pride. Historic preservation is Smart Growth, and smart investment. Historic preservation, in and of itself, has become one of the most important tools in the entire Smart Growth toolbox.

Smart Growth advocates a density of use. Historic residential and commercial neighborhoods were built to be dense and continue today with existing mix-used developments and new infill buildings. The diversity of housing sites, qualities, styles and characteristics of historic neighborhoods stands in sharp contrast to the commonplace character of current subdivisions. The diversity of housing options means a diversity of people who can live in historic neighborhoods. Reinvestment

in historic areas in and of itself revitalizes and revalues the nearby existing investment of both the public and private sector.



*Manor Inn (1898), local historic landmark, converted into 35 apartment units in early 1990s photo courtesy of Albemarle Park Neighborhood Association.*

Economic growth means new jobs. Rehabilitation of older and historic neighborhoods and commercial areas is sound economic development policy. Rehabilitation projects, such as the Grove Arcade, create jobs where the

*“Smart Growth is an approach to development that respects the existing built environment as well as the patterns of neighborhoods and commercial districts.”*

*Cathy Baylock*



*Bledsoe Building (1920s), West Asheville currently undergoing rehabilitation –mixed use development photo courtesy of Pack Memorial Library*



workers already exist. As a general rule, new construction is 50 percent labor and 50 percent materials, while rehabilitation projects are often 60 to 70 percent labor. New construction projects consume HVAC systems, sheetrock, and timber from other states and regions, while rehabilitation projects consume services from local carpenters, plumbers, painters, and electricians, who are our neighbors. They subsequently spend their paycheck in the local economy, resulting in a significantly greater local economic impact dollar for dollar than new construction. The rehabilitation of historic buildings and the jobs it creates is Smart Growth and wise economic investment.

The rehabilitation of historic structures does not consume any new land. The conversion of a historic department store into residential units and office and retail space reduces the demand for the conversion of five acres of farmland into a subdivision and commercial center. The economic revitalization of our main streets and Downtown reduces the demand for another strip center. The restoration of a 1920s building, such as the Jackson Building, Westall Building and Legal Building, reduces the demand for another suburban office building. No new land is consumed when rehabilitating a historic building. Almost without exception historic buildings are located where public infrastructure already exists. No new water lines, sewer lines, streets, curbs, gutters required. The revitalization of historic development before absorbing undeveloped properties is Smart Growth. So in the end, protecting our surrounding mountains from new development insensitive to our environment is Smart Growth.

## Historic Preservation Trends

During the late 1970s Asheville's Downtown and several of its historic neighborhoods were on a downward spiral into the depths of decay. That erosion led to vacant buildings, marginal businesses, and empty streets in Downtown. Once proud neighborhoods turned into groups of redlined, crime-infested, and run-down buildings, where dilapidation was the norm rather than the exception. Today, those neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown, like Montford, Albemarle Park, and Chestnut Hill, are experiencing a resurgence. This revival has supported the renaissance of Asheville's Downtown. Three important economic incentives helped reverse the erosion of both the structures and the tax base; (1) national and local historic district designations, (2) historic tax credits for the rehabilitation of certified historic buildings, and (3) local historic landmark designations. The positive results from all preservation activities include job creation, a vibrant downtown and stable neighborhoods like Montford, improved community appearance, compatible and appropriate infill structures like McDonald's in Biltmore Village, and greater community pride.

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 created the first federal tax incentive for preserving income producing historic structures.

Congress further expanded the act in later years to encourage more private investment. In 1993, the North Carolina General Assembly created the first state historic tax incentives for income producing historic structures. In 1998, the General Assembly further expanded the tax incentives for both income producing and non-income producing historic properties

"It's kind of meaningless to preserve a single historic building surrounded by asphalt and ugliness. When we lose the context of these buildings, we lose a lot."

*Constance Beaumont,  
National Trust for Historic Preservation*



*Stephens Lee Gymnasium, a local historic landmark*



Since the implementation of the North Carolina State Historic Tax Credits in 1998, the development of residential units in downtown Asheville has boomed, in part due to the 30% historic rehabilitation tax credit for non-income producing properties. These new residential units have stimulated the development of even more independent businesses to serve the new residential and visitor populations.

As a comparison of the effectiveness of the state historic rehabilitation tax credits the following is offered. From 1976 to 1998, the 22 years prior to the State's 1998 historic tax credit, there were 103 incoming-producing historic rehabilitation projects completed in Asheville and Buncombe County worth \$45,881,515. Since the implementation of the 1998 state historic tax credits, in just three short years, thirty-eight income-producing historic rehabilitation projects have been completed, are currently being rehabilitated or are proposed projects. These projects represent a total of \$41,971,291 in investments. From 1998 through May 2001, ten non-income producing projects have been completed for a total worth of \$992,648. Thirty-one addi-

tional non-income producing rehabilitation projects have been proposed or are under construction for a total worth of \$5,860,000 in investments.

The historic tax credit incentive for the rehabilitation of non-income producing historic structures is increasing the demand for National Register status for districts and properties.

Another preservation trend with positive results is the conjunction between the public and private sectors to provide decent housing and at the same time increase property values in one of Asheville's most historic neighborhood. Historic preservation techniques were used to rehabilitate 105 houses in the historic Montford neighborhood, prompting property values to increase 85.5 percent (City average was 40 percent). Funds were allocated through Community Development Block Grants.

### **Inventory Studies and Surveys**

A program to preserve historic resources in a community must begin with identification of those resources. Resources in the City of

Asheville have been identified as the result of comprehensive surveys of Downtown Asheville, Albemarle Park, Biltmore Village, Montford, and Chestnut Hill-Liberty area and of surveys of smaller, individual development parcels. Much identification work still remains to be done. The vast interior land of the City has not been subjected to a comprehensive archaeological/architectural survey.

In 1978, a reconnaissance or windshield survey of the historic resources in the City of Asheville and Buncombe County was conducted. The surveyors inspected locations that contained significant concentrations of these early structures as well as rural locations across Buncombe County. The structures were individually inventoried and briefly described, their number was counted and their general characteristics, such as style, condition, integrity, and size, were summarized. A similar survey of historic resources was conducted in the City of Asheville in 1998.

That architectural inventory led to the placement of twelve districts (including the expansion of the Chestnut Hill National Register Historic District to include Hillside Street,

Madison Avenue, Oak Park Road, and Arlington Road) and eight individual properties on the State Study list a preliminary step to inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Once the State has determined a district or property is eligible for National Register status a National Register nomination must be submitted to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. Subsequent to the 1998 survey both West End/Clingman and Shiloh were placed on the State Study List.

*"You always have models of what works if you are retaining some of your past."*

*Jody Kuhne; Historic Resources Commission*



## New Urbanism

“New urbanism” is a land development management concept that has the potential for widespread application in Asheville, especially along the City’s commercial corridors. Simply stated, new urbanism establishes a development pattern that is based on structure location, building design and access, parking location, and building height, rather than on the permitted and prohibited land uses that traditional zoning uses as its primary development management tool. In other words, new urbanism regulates land use by defining the “box” in which the land use occurs, rather than specifically listing the land uses that are allowed and those that are prohibited. As such, new urbanism is consistent with many of the City’s Smart Growth policies.

Generally, new urbanist development permits a significantly more dense land use pattern than does traditional zoning. Traditional zoning is typically based on the suburban single-family house as the model for all development. In traditional zoning, the building is placed in the middle of the lot through the application of setback requirements, access and parking

occurs in front of the building, and all the noxious activities (dumpsters, truck loading, etc.) occur in the back. This generally results in a development pattern that minimizes the amount of building that can be put on a particular lot and emphasizes vehicular access as the predominant means by which people get to the building. In addition, in an area where most commercial development occurs in a linear fashion along major roads, like in Asheville, land use conflicts occur because the unsightly, noise and odor producing activities are relegated to close proximity to adjoining neighborhoods since those activities occur at the back of the site. Furthermore, because the site design favors automotive rather than pedestrian traffic, it is not usually very easy get from the neighborhood to the commercial use.

For more information about New Urbanism, see Appendix C that contains the “charter” of this planning movement.

Retrofitting a new urbanist development pattern onto an existing commercial corridor developed under traditional zoning regulations can occur fairly readily. The new urbanist development pattern provides a strong finan-

cial incentive through increased land use intensity for the property owner, thereby creating a market-based conversion mechanism. In addition, existing structures can often be accommodated in the retrofit project. The Atlanta Bread Company development (pictured below) at the corner of Merrimon and Edgewood Avenues is a local example of how this retrofit can start.

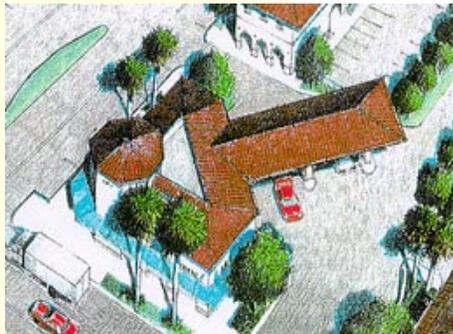


Additionally, at right is an illustration of how one of Asheville's older commercial centers can be retrofitted using New Urbanist principles. (Illustration by Alan Glines, City Urban Designer.)

### Conceptual Redevelopment of Innsbruck Mall



New Urbanist Convenience Store/ Gas Station Design, *New Hillsborough Land Use Plan; Andres Duany, Jame Moore, et. al.*



Some cities have chosen to implement a new urbanist development pattern throughout their entire jurisdiction. Given Asheville's existing development pattern (predominantly large lot single-family) and topographical constraints, such a step does not seem to be advisable. However, provision should be made to incorporate new urbanist development practices along many of the City's commercial corridors and to accommodate these practices for some infill development.

The City's Urban Village zoning district creates a new urbanist development pattern. In addition, zoning overlays along North Charlotte Street and part of Montford Avenue will also result in that same pattern. Certainly the Central Business District (CBD) zoning in Downtown and along part out of Haywood Avenue in West Asheville also promote this pattern. Several new zoning districts are in



New Urbanist Vehicle Service Designs

the process of development to provide for the application of new urbanist principles along

selected commercial corridors and in appropriate infill areas.

Some flexibility needs to be provided to accommodate modern land uses that do not readily fit into the new urbanist "box." Three of these land uses are: (1) convenience stores/gas stations and other uses with drive-through facilities; (2) vehicle repair facilities and (3) automobile sales operations. Each of these specific land uses is, quite naturally, heavily reliant on automobile access, making it difficult to accommodate them through a standard new urbanist development pattern. Consequently, a different technique can be used to allow these uses to occur. This technique is the "development template." Development templates are required site designs that respect the operational needs of these types of uses, while allowing them to fit into the urbanist development pattern. The illustration and photograph on this page show how these land uses can be accommodated through this zoning technique. (Please note that the model for the development template for vehicle repair facilities is the Public Works garage located on South Charlotte Street.)

## Open Space, Forest and Wildlife Habitat Protection

An important goal of the City's Smart Growth program is the protection of open space including forests, agricultural lands, and other natural areas. The preservation of these key environmental resources is critical to sustaining our quality of life. The positive aspects of open space preservation are many and include environmental benefits such as the preservation of native plant communities, the protection of wildlife habitat, the mitigation of air and water pollution, erosion control, and wind and noise abatement. There are also economic benefits such as an increase in the property tax base, reduction in the need for infrastructure construction, the protection of working farmlands and an increase in income from tourism.

The forest ecosystems in and around Asheville are one of the most biologically diverse in the world. Although most of the area was logged around the turn of the 20th century, the forests have since regenerated. Except in areas that were converted to agriculture, the species composition of the second growth forest is

largely the same as the virgin forest, which they replaced. Now the forest faces new threats such as urbanization, which results in the fragmentation and loss of native wildlife habitat. In addition the proliferation of invasive, exotic species that were often introduced for agricultural and horticultural use, are now a problem for many native plant communities.

Wildlife biologists and ecologists have long recognized that the best way to preserve native plants, and wildlife habitat is to create an interconnected system of green space to counter habitat fragmentation. Protecting and restoring connections between parks, riparian corridors, greenways and other important ecological areas is a key concept for the science of conservation biology and the practice of ecosystem management. Networks of preserved open spaces and riparian corridors can also help to shape and guide urban form, while at the same time helping to prevent urban sprawl.

Just as a community needs basic infrastructure such as roads, sewers and telecommunication networks, it also must have a network of green spaces. Green infrastructure is a term

that is being used more frequently in land conservation discussions. Green infrastructure as defined by the Conservation Fund is “an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations.” The green infrastructure approach ties in with Smart Growth and differs from conventional conservation approaches in that it attempts to work within the framework of land development, growth management and infrastructure planning rather than in isolation or in opposition to development.

One of the major problems associated especially with suburban development is the explosive increase in land consumed relative to the population growth. For example, a large lot subdivision that consumes a wooded site or farm for one acre house lots. Utilizing a different approach to land development that embodies the concept of green infrastructure and incorporates the principles of conservation design could result in a development that yields the same number of houses, while at the same time retaining a large portion of the original site as woodland or farmland. Utilizing this approach allows a community to preserve its

own unique natural and cultural heritage.

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

Asheville is fortunate in that the Blue Ridge Parkway passes through the City as it winds its way through the Appalachian Mountains from the Shenandoah National Park to the Great Smoky Mountains, providing a truly unique, high quality scenic and recreational experience. The park’s uninterrupted corridor facilitates the protection of a diverse range of flora and fauna, including rare and endangered plant and animal species. The Parkway’s importance to the region goes beyond its national popularity and is deeply rooted in the culture of the Blue Ridge. Additionally the Parkway contributes to the regional tourism economy while promoting a shared regional identity and a venue for the interpretation of the natural and cultural history of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

### **Land Trusts**

Land trusts have been gaining momentum throughout the southeast in the past decade. A land trust is a private, non-profit organiza-

tion whose primary purpose is the protection of open space. The land trust typically will focus its efforts in a specific community, state or region and protect the kind of open space that is important to that specific area. The City of Asheville cooperates with a number of land trusts in order to preserve open space for future generations.

#### **Conservation Trust for North Carolina**

The statewide Conservation Trust for North Carolina is an umbrella group for all of the land trusts in the state. The Conservation Trust works cooperatively with private landowners, communities and local land trusts to protect land in its natural state. The Conservation trust is also involved in protecting land along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

#### **Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy**

The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is the local land trust for the Asheville area. Their mission is to protect the world's oldest mountains for the benefit of present and future generations. The Emerald Lands Program (ELP) of The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy was formed specifi-

cally to conserve natural, scenic, recreational, and historic urban and rural lands throughout Buncombe County for present and future generations. The ELP works with private landowners, local citizens' groups, and public agencies to help identify and preserve those lands that clearly benefit the local community, by protecting farms, forests, stream banks, ground-water recharge areas or wetlands that have a likelihood of future development which would not preserve their special value to the community.

#### **Trust for Public Land**

Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) is the only national nonprofit working exclusively to protect land for human enjoyment and well-being. TPL helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities. TPL's real estate specialists work with landowners, government agencies, and community groups to:

- Create urban parks, gardens, greenways, and riverways
- Build livable communities by setting aside open space in the path of growth

- Conserve land for watershed protection, scenic beauty, and close-to-home recreation
- Safeguard the character of communities by preserving historic landmarks and landscapes.

TPL pioneers new ways to finance parks and open space; helps generate federal, state, and local conservation funding; and promotes the importance of public lands. TPL helps communities create a “greenprint for growth” by protecting important land that may be threatened by urban or suburban sprawl.

**Governor’s Million Acres Initiative**

The NC Million Acre Initiative is a collaborative, state-led endeavor to accelerate the rate that land is protected in North Carolina and to permanently preserve an additional one million acres of land by the end of 2009. The state is accomplishing these goals by:

- fostering partnerships among private and public land protection partners
- promoting regional open space planning, and
- providing information about the importance of open space protection.

**Development Tools Goals and Strategies**

**Annexation, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and Joint Planning Area**

**Goal I. Continue to use the urban development tools of annexation, joint planning area, and/or extraterritorial jurisdiction, as applicable, in providing for the orderly growth of the City.**

Strategies

1. Promote voluntary annexation of developing and developed areas by offering high quality urban services and upgrading these services as needed as the City’s boundaries grow.
2. Continue to regularly pursue annexation of areas developed at urban density levels on the periphery of the City.
3. Utilize and maintain the resolution of consideration alternative as a public awareness and annexation facilitation tool.
4. Promote cooperative land use planning and

development regulation in the Joint Planning Area in a manner consistent with the provisions of the interlocal agreement between the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

5. Consider expanding the range of services offered in the extraterritorial jurisdiction to the full range of zoning, subdivision, building permitting and inspection, nuisance abatement, and economic development services offered to City residents.

## **Green Building**

### **Goal I. Develop an incentive-based green building program incorporating the LEED system.**

#### Strategies

1. Promote public education about the benefits of green building through such activities as:
  - Educate architects, contractors, builders and the general public about environmental impacts of buildings and how these impacts can be minimized.
  - Develop a program to promote green build-

ing through formal recognition of projects that are environmental friendly.

- Integrate information about green building concepts into the City's Website.
  - Develop a brochure outlining green building practices.
2. Educate City inspection and plan review staff about the benefits of green building; provide training intended to make them "ambassadors" of the green building program.
  3. Eliminate disincentives for the use of green building techniques and materials in City codes and development review practices.
  4. Promote green building concepts through the use of Smart Growth planning practices, including infill and adaptive reuse, mixed-use development, and transportation system design that incorporates roundabouts.

## **Historic Preservation**

### **Goal I. Identify, evaluate, document, and promote Asheville's prehistoric and historic resources.**

## Strategies

1. Perform a comprehensive survey to locate buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects significant to the prehistory and history of Asheville and to continue to seek funding for such surveys.
2. Develop and reflect documented historic resource data on all maps and documents maintained by the Planning and Development Department to promote responsiveness to patron requests, public education, and efficiency in reviewing development applications.
3. Establish and expand educational and public outreach programs such as staff-supervised volunteer-internship within the Historic Resources Commission, providing brochures, lectures, exhibits, etc. regarding historical resources, preservation programs and organizations, thereby promoting preservation and tourism and seek funding sources to support such programs.
4. Seek to establish, maintain, and strengthen preservation partnerships with municipal

agencies and local institutions for implementing preservation objectives.

## **Goal II. Continue efforts involving the preservation, enhancement and management of change within local historic districts and properties and the continuing education towards the preservation of historic resources in The City of Asheville.**

### Strategies

1. Encourage the preservation of prehistoric and historic resources by providing incentives for preservation through such programs as the Griffin Awards program, which recognize outstanding preservation efforts.
2. Encourage citizen awareness and participation in efforts to rehabilitate historic neighborhoods and structures and inspire interest in local historic preservation by providing technical assistance to citizens in appropriate preservation techniques.
3. Support the expansion of the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County

and the Historic Resources Commission's celebration of the National Preservation Week, known locally as "Heritage Week".

4. Encourage the City and County school systems to further develop historic preservation programming.
5. Promote revolving funds and other preservation techniques for continued assistance to endangered properties throughout the community.

**Goal III. Encourage neighborhood livability and property values through the restoration and rehabilitation of existing and future historic districts consistent with the Smart Growth initiatives.**

Strategies

1. Promote the adaptive reuse of the City's valuable commercial and residential historic resources.
2. Encourage the establishment of a low-interest loan program through private sources for rehabilitation assistance to local

property owners in designated local historic districts.

3. Recognize and develop the historic component of Asheville's tourist economy through coordination with the Asheville-Buncombe Tourism Development Authority.

**Open Space, Forest and Wildlife Habitat Protection**

**Goal I. Protect scenic views and vistas.**

Strategies

1. Continue to enforce existing ordinances that address building height, billboard control, and cell towers.
2. Coordinate with the Blue Ridge Parkway to determine the effectiveness of current viewshed protection measures and bring forward any necessary adjustments to these measures for consideration.
3. Continue to protect steep slopes through enhancement of the hillside development

regulations and technical standards for development on steep slopes.

4. Develop specific regulations addressing ridgetop development and land clearing to preserve scenic views and vistas.

**Goal II. Promote environmental education and awareness.**

Strategies

1. Work with other agencies and organizations to improve environmental awareness.
2. Develop a brochure to educate public on best management practices.
3. Continue efforts to develop a demonstration garden, showcasing species suitable for use in this area.
4. Produce a landscape guide for developers, with emphasize on use of native plants, eradication of invasive species and proper planting and maintenance techniques.
5. Develop appropriate regulations to promote the use of native vegetation and to prohibit

the use of deleterious exotic species.

**Goal III. Identify areas of unique natural heritage, primary scenic vistas, potential wildlife corridors, and areas of critical environmental sensitivity; develop programs for the conservation of these areas.**

Strategies

1. Create a comprehensive conservation map for the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction.
2. Coordinate open space conservation plans with Recreation and Greenway Master Plans.
3. Develop and continue to enhance existing regulations that require development clustering and preservation of open space.
4. Pursue statutory authority for transfer development rights to provide opportunities for flexible conservation of critical areas while respecting private property rights.
5. Develop requirements for wildlife relocation

when large tracts of undeveloped land are proposed for development.

6. Develop a fee in lieu of program for the preservation of open space.
7. Continue to work with conservation organizations to identify and preserve important natural resources.
8. Enhance the existing density bonus provision for preservation of key environmental features.

