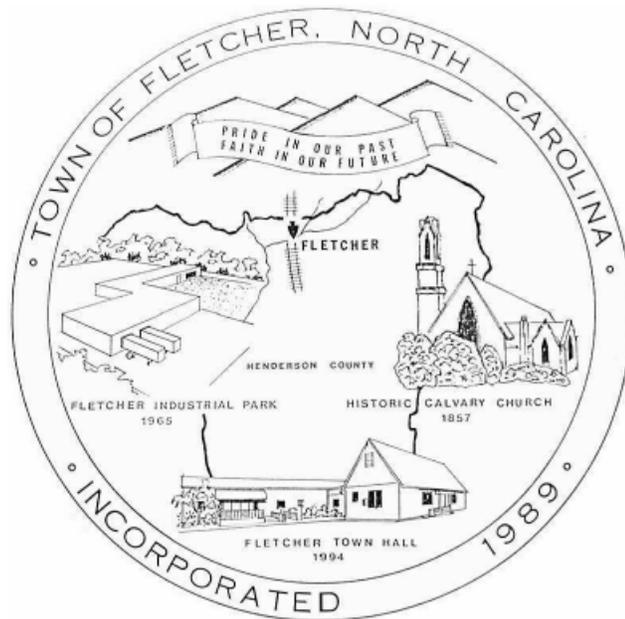


# 2004 Strategic Plan Update



**Town of Fletcher, North Carolina**

June 14, 2004

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Narrative.....	9
Action Plan.....	38

## Appendices:

- Appendix A – Impact-Feasibility Plot
- Appendix B – Proposed Strategic Initiatives -- Notes on Impact-Feasibility Plot
- Appendix C – Map: Town of Fletcher Strategic Location
- Appendix D – Map: Town of Fletcher and Surrounding Area
- Appendix E – Environmental Scan Panel Meeting Summary

# Town of Fletcher

## Fletcher Strategic Plan Update

June 14, 2004

### Executive Summary

In July, 2003 the Fletcher Town Council decided to update the Town's 1999 strategic plan. Land-of-Sky Regional Council was hired as facilitator and planning consultant. The plan update was conducted between July, 2003 and June, 2004.

Strategic planning is particularly well-suited to the dynamic situation in which the Town of Fletcher finds itself. Geographically positioned in a growth corridor between two thriving urban areas, in one of the most rapidly-growing counties in North Carolina, the one thing Fletcher is sure to face is ***continuing change***.

### Key Findings

1. Growth in and around Fletcher has continued at a rapid pace
2. Several significant external events, forces and trends have occurred or continued since completion of the 1999 strategic plan
3. The Town has made significant progress in implementing its 1999 strategic plan
4. Substantial activity toward implementing the 1999 Plan also has been going on "in the background" that may not be apparent to many citizens
5. Several issues noted in the 1999 plan are of more critical importance due to some of the findings stated above. These issues are captured in two themes that were mentioned in the December 2003 survey and by numerous participants in the stakeholder meetings:
  - a. Identity of the Town
  - b. Economic Vibrancy of Fletcher
6. Nearly all of the 1999 Objectives fit very well under the 2004 themes of Town Identity and Economic Vibrancy.

### Strategic Themes in 2004

#### Theme #1: Identity of the Town

In the 1999 Strategic Plan, the lack of identity – and specifically a distinguishable downtown area – was an issue. In 2004, survey respondents and stakeholders

continued to cite the lack of identity for Fletcher as a concern. In the Post Card Survey, the Heart of Fletcher was mentioned prominently among “Projects” in responses to Question #4 – “What would you like to see happen in Fletcher over the next ten years?” One of the top-ranked comments (as determined by sticky-dot voting) in the FABA-sponsored Business Community meeting was that part of the difficulty in “buying local” (i.e., availability of certain products, supplies in Fletcher) is that there is no strong identity associated with Fletcher. Asheville & Hendersonville are better known – therefore, people look for products there, and suppliers locate there rather than in Fletcher.

### **Identity-Related Issues Cited by Stakeholders**

- 1 Housing affordability
- 2 High turnover rate among subdivision residents
- 3 The Highway 25 “strip” -- Lost between Asheville and Hendersonville
- 4 “Old Fletcher and New Fletcher”
- 5 Visual appeal
- 6 A town center with pedestrian access
- 7 Getting people involved

### **Theme #2: Economic Vibrancy of Fletcher**

The lack of core businesses and business services in Fletcher and the consequent “leakage” of dollars out of the Town’s economy was an issue in the 1999 strategic plan. This issue persists in 2004. Additionally, two other areas of concern related to the Town’s economic vibrancy emerged in the 2004 strategic plan update process.

The second area of economic concern -- loss of industrial jobs -- is not limited to Fletcher or Henderson County – but, as a stakeholder in the FABA-Business Community meeting said, “The impact of a business taking a hit (e.g., a manufacturing plant closing) is greater in a small town because its ‘absorptive capacity’ is less.” The recent announcement of the closing of the Steelcase plant brings home to Fletcher the loss of our industrial base being experienced countywide, statewide and nationwide. This loss not only reduces the number of local high-paying jobs available to Fletcher’s citizens – but it also weakens the Town Government’s ad valorem tax base – which brings us to the third area of economic concern.

The third area of concern is the financial strength of the Town Government. The Town of Fletcher is faced with the following financial challenges:

- Maintaining the high level of services its citizens want and hold in high regard;

- Expanding those services and infrastructure to keep up with the rapid rate of growth the Town is experiencing;
- Implementing elements of the Town’s vision, including the Heart of Fletcher, greenways, trails, recreation facilities, signage, etc.
- Being able to leverage the resources to influence where and how growth occurs.

## **New Vision and Mission Statements**

The planning process resulted in a revised Vision Statement. Additionally, a Mission Statement was added to the strategic plan.

### Vision Statement

*Fletcher -- where forward thinking, technology and a small town atmosphere combine to grow a community of caring families, individuals and businesses -- all working together. We welcome people of all kinds into the rich social fabric that makes up our town.*

### Mission Statement

*The Town of Fletcher exists to bring progressive leadership, professional management and dedicated staff to providing municipal services and an environment in which its citizens can lead satisfying, safe and productive lives.*

## **Proposed Strategic Initiatives**

Strategic Initiatives are the major areas of strategic action in the Plan Update. Objectives are specific outcomes desired in each strategic initiative. Action Steps are the “who-what-when-how much money—where will it come from” tasks, the accomplishment of which will move the Town toward its Objectives.

### **INITIATIVE A – IRON TRIANGLE**

(Balanced growth in the Commercial, Industrial and Residential Sectors)

#### Objectives

- 1 Build tax base
- 2 Keep industry in town/protect industrial jobs
  - a Add a Park Ridge Hospital EMS station in TOF
  - b Key action: zoning to protect land from residential development
    - 01 Requests for zoning changes
    - 02 Ease of permit application & processing
  - c Key action: community college
  - d Move industry’s suppliers to TOF
  - e Promote TOF as an industrial location
- 3 Identify strategies for growth
  - a Commercial growth – C1 corridor

- b Alternative land development standards to enable/encourage growth
  - 01 More flexible & creative setback & parking requirements
- 4 Add core businesses to slow the “leakage”
  - a Core businesses will take more time to obtain than other businesses
  - b Businesses from outside of Fletcher (e.g., service businesses like Chef Michaels’ & entrepreneurs) associate with FABAs. They may need expansion space in TOF.
- 5 Consider incentives and/or regulatory tools to increase the supply of affordable housing units in Fletcher
  - a Employers can know that their employees can live nearby
  - b Zoning
    - 01 Inclusionary zoning is easy – but we need “the right developer”
    - 02 Also – surrounding homes will push up the prices of affordable homes unless deed restrictions are put on resale values.
  - c Habitat for Humanity
    - 01 Habitat program is very feasible and high-impact
    - 02 Habitat communities can be established on 2-3 acres
  - d Rentals – affordable rentals should be available in TOF also

## **INITIATIVE B -- HEART OF FLETCHER**

### Objectives

- 1 Heart of Fletcher Development
  - a Complete a central & walkable downtown business district
    - 01 Like downtown Asheville or Hendersonville – but with a small-town feel
      - Live downtown, work downtown, walk to lunch, walk to soccer
    - 02 There may be a certain developer who wishes to work in this environment
      - Possible conduct a “developer forum”
      - Perhaps piecemeal development is best (market parcels to smaller developers, but under a “big picture” set of standards/master plan)
      - A marketing video – like the LOSRC “Sense of Place” video – could help (see below)
  - b Incorporate business development infrastructure into HOF:
    - 01 Physical infrastructure
      - Fiber optic, high-bandwidth IT infrastructure, including Wi-Fi “hot spot”
        - Bring affordable broadband to residents and businesses
      - TOF could resell broadband capacity
      - In addition to fiber optics, there is a lot of activity in wireless now (5-6 carriers). TOF could competitively bid & resell so hi-tech companies could afford fiber & wireless broadband.
      - Wi-Fi could reach 1-2 miles from HOF
        - TOF could become one of the first Wi-Fi hotspots in the region
        - TOF could then market “small-town/old-town feel with hi-tech infrastructure”
    - 02 Educational infrastructure

- Community College campus
  - Continue talking to Senator Dole about BRCC satellite campus
  - Possibly finish 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of new Town Hall in HOF for BRCC
    - Or put BRCC in new library in HOF (see below)
  - Also – Henderson County needs a new library & would like to build it in HOF
    - Possibly TOF donate an acre of HOF land to County for library
  - Community College capital projects must have approval of BoCC, since it is County \$\$
- 03 Marketing Infrastructure—marketing TOF
  - Keep the excitement of being part of creating a new downtown going
  - Stay with HOF & market it. What is HOF?
  - Video (already working on this with Ernie Sigman)
  - Wi-Fi could enable TOF to market “small-town/old-town feel with hi-tech infrastructure”
- 2 Obtain R/W for Fanning Bridge Road extension by donation or condemnation
  - a Fund with Local Option Sales Tax (see Support Strategy SS3 below)
- 3 Complete gateways & signage
  - a Easements in progress
  - b Funding already is set aside for this

## **INITIATIVE C -- BOLSTER THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF TOWN GOVERNMENT**

### Objectives

- 1 Enhance operating revenues
  - a To fund increasing services to keep pace with growth
  - b To fill any existing gaps in services
  - c Strategy: increase the commercial and industrial tax bases
    - 01 Example: annexing Continental Teves increased TOF’s tax revenues by \$250,000 with little need for additional services
  - d Strategy: look at user fees for garbage & recycling in future
  - e Strategy: consider other value-added, user-fee services
  - f Strategy: revaluation (tax base is typically up 20%) provides a “catch-up” opportunity
- 2 Establish a CIP seed fund
  - a Manager will propose a 2-cent per \$100 tax increase for FY 205
    - 01 Each cent increase produces revenues of \$75-78,000
  - b Roads/subdivision streets repaving program
- 3 Use grants more widely & effectively

## **INITIATIVE D -- SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES**

### Objectives

- 1 Marketing & support infrastructure
  - a Stabilize FABA
    - 01 New Town Hall plan in HOF calls for initial space for FABA

- 02 TOF cease to be a major financial supporter of FABBA
  - FABBA should not be an “agency” of TOF
  - FABBA must be independent of TOF re: zoning to avoid conflict of interest
- 03 FABBA is part of the teamwork approach to marketing TOF, etc.
- 04 TOF could keep a cooperatively-shared database for local businesses
- 05 FABBA is the appropriate “actor” to implement most of the remainder of Initiative D
- b Add FABBA staff
- c FABBA marketing program
- d Buy local campaign
- e Networking guide
- f Business forum
- g Alternative ways to make land purchase & development affordable
  - 01 “Co-opping” purchases of land
  - 02 Other creative approaches to land development

## **INITIATIVE E – COMMUNITY PARKS & GREENWAYS**

### Objectives

- 1 Use hub & spoke design concept
  - a Community Parks (hubs)
    - 01 Parks & Recreation Master Plan
      - Meritor Park
  - b Greenways
    - 01 Greenway Master Plan
- 2 Continue Fletcher greenway system
  - a Grant funding
  - b Grassroots approach with volunteers & donated materials
  - c Corporate support
  - d Work in partnership with Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy to get easements for TOF greenways
  - e Work on one greenway at a time, until it is finished, before starting another
- 3 Business Component
  - a Locate businesses on trails to generate more customer traffic
    - 01 Primarily a HOF strategy
  - b Sidewalks in front of businesses also

## **SUPPORT STRATEGIES (“SS”)**

The following strategies are not major Strategic Initiatives, but play a role in supporting the success of one or more Objectives of the five Strategic Initiatives A-E above:

### **SS1 Achieve Community Consensus on Growth Issues**

- a Taxes

- b Regulation
- c Density – urban vs. rural
- d Ultimate size of TOF
- e Getting more people involved in Town issues

**SS2 Use volunteerism more effectively**

- a Explore doing projects largely via donated materials & volunteer labor

**SS3 Obtain approval for additional Local Occupancy Sales Tax** in the 2004 Short Session

- a LOST funding needed for TOF marketing video

**SS4 Keep pace with the growing need for Public Safety services**

- a All the other strategies have Public Safety implications
- b Public Safety capacity must keep pace with growth of the Town and other strategies

**Priorities and Action Plan**

The Town does not have the resources to pursue all of the above objectives simultaneously – nor is it the goal of strategic planning to do so. If the Town attempts to tackle too much too soon, several risks arise:

- The strategic plan may collapse “of its own weight;”
- Credibility problems with the public may arise due to a perception of Town “non-performance” of the strategic plan;
- Discouragement can set in at all levels
- By the time the Town gets to implementing parts of its Action Plan, they may be obsolete because so much time has passed and circumstances have changed.

Therefore, rather than developing a hypothetical Action Plan for all objectives, the Town took the following approach:

1. **Set overall priorities** among the above five Strategic Initiatives A-E, based upon their predicted impact upon the Town and the feasibility of implementing them. An “Impact-Feasibility Plot” appears as Appendix A.
2. **Select objectives for FY 2005** in accord with the overall priorities list, and with a mind to the logical order and interdependence of the different objectives;
3. **Develop a FY 2005 Action Plan** – these are the “who-what-when-how much money—where will it come from” Action Steps, specifying action targets for the Town’s upcoming Fiscal Year. Each year at this time, an Action Plan for the upcoming Fiscal Year can be established in concert with the Town Budget for that FY.

The FY 2005 Action Plan begins on page 38 of this document.

## Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Revision

A successful strategic plan does not end by publishing the plan document and assuming it will get implemented. Successful implementation requires several things:

- **“Sparkplugs”** – also called “Champions,” these are people in the community who are passionate about a certain part of the strategic plan, and are willing to volunteer their time and energy to expedite certain Strategic Initiatives and see that they get done.
- **“Icebreakers”**— this term came from one of the FSPU working group members. It is a special project or Objective within a larger Strategic Initiative which, when implemented, will “break loose” the entire Initiative – in other words, garner enthusiasm among the public and “sparkplugs” for the entire Initiative.
- A **designated group** – accountable to the Town Council -- to oversee implementation, tracking, evaluation and revision of the Plan (Note – this group is not responsible for carrying out the implementation of the entire plan – only for overseeing that process);
- **Tracking of implementation** – that is, documentation that the Objectives and Action Steps are carried out as planned;
- **Evaluation** – that is, to determine to what degree the implemented Action Steps are having the desired results in reaching the Objectives;
- **Revision as needed** – new or emerging Opportunities, Threats, Strengths and Weaknesses may suggest that the Plan be revised. A typical cycle would be to do this annually in the winter, so that any plan revisions could be worked into the Action Plan and Town Budget for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

# Fletcher Strategic Plan Update – Narrative

June 14, 2004

## Introduction

Incorporated in 1989, the Town of Fletcher has established a reputation for progressive government, excellent town management and public services, and a bold vision for its future. Geographically positioned at the heart of a bustling region, the Town finds itself beset by opportunities and challenges like never before.

Similar circumstances in the mid-nineties led the Town to formalize a vision and strategic plan, which was published in 1999. In the following five years, Fletcher implemented several important goals of the 1999 strategic plan.

However, as Town Manager Craig Honeycutt said, "We've come a long way, but we can't rest on our laurels. We've got to invest in the things we've become known for." Thus, in July, 2003 the Town Council decided to update the Town's 1999 strategic plan. This document is the result.

## Why a Strategic Plan?

Strategic planning is particularly well-suited to the dynamic situation in which the Town of Fletcher finds itself. Geographically positioned in a growth corridor between two thriving urban areas, in one of the most rapidly-growing counties in North Carolina, the one thing Fletcher is sure to face is ***continuing change***.

Strategic planning has been described as *a systematic way to manage change*. It looks at the world around the organization or community and decides what it must do now to *position itself for success* a few years from now. It looks at *a few major initiatives* which will be critical to future success.

**Characteristics of strategic planning** include:

1. **A look outward** at forces, threats, trends and opportunities which are beyond the community's control, but which will have a large impact on its future. "How can we take advantage of opportunities? How can we minimize the harmful effects of threats?"
2. **A focus on a critical issues and goals** that are the most important in determining future performance. This requires difficult choices. "What are the two or three things that will really make a difference in our community?"
3. **A near-future focus**, that is, "What can Fletcher do over the next few years that will position us for superior performance in the long term?"

4. **A realistic assessment** of the resources available to carry out the desired strategies. "What strengths does our community have? What weaknesses will we need to work around or improve in order to accomplish our goals?"
5. **An action orientation.** Sometimes comprehensive plans are so massive and complex that they "sit on the shelf" and never get implemented. A strategic plan, however, sets out specific action steps and actors to ensure that the strategies are carried out, and often these actions can take place right away. Actions are monitored for success, and a periodic review is done to see if the strategies are still relevant and/or if they need to be altered, redirected, or re-assigned.
6. **Flexibility** – the Town cannot afford to do a complete rewrite of its strategic plan every time something inside the Town or in its external environment changes. So its strategic plan must be *flexible* in order to respond to ever-changing opportunities and threats. As Town Manager Craig Honeycutt said, "This is a living document." For the plan to be effective, the Town must track implementation of the plan; determine whether the actions specified in the plan are having the intended effects; be on the lookout for significant changes within and outside of the Town; and modify the plan accordingly as needed.

### **What Should the Strategic Plan Update Process Look Like?**

Early in the process, Town staff met with the facilitator from Land-of-Sky Regional Council to develop the following desired characteristics of the strategic plan update:

- 1 The process should be as encompassing/accessible to citizens as possible;
- 2 It should encourage new residents of the Town to participate, as well as existing residents;
- 3 As Mayor Bill Moore has said, let's "Ask the people what they want"
- 4 The end product should include a prioritized set of tangible action steps, endorsed by Town Council, as "marching orders" for Town staff for the next few years;
- 5 Realistic objectives/goals;
- 6 Identify new opportunities we haven't yet thought about;
- 7 The plan should recognize that all the Town's projects and activities are one integrated whole, not a bunch of disparate parts;
- 8 Take a fresh look at the 1999 strategic plan:
  - Does the Vision still feel good?
  - How have our priorities changed since the original SP?
  - What are we doing right?
  - What have we missed?
  - What is still valid, & what not?
  - What things should we raise in priority?
  - What things should we drop or lower in priority?
  - What's new? (new initiatives on the table; new ideas out there)

- Create an environment or forum in which Council and other boards can listen effectively to community input.

## **A Typical Strategic Planning Process**

The basic steps in strategic planning include:

1. Vision (what Fletcher wants to become)
2. Mission (the Town Government's role in making the Vision a reality)
3. External scan (Opportunities & Threats arising largely from outside of the Town)
4. Internal Scan (Strengths & Weaknesses) – a “Reality check” on the ability of the Town to tackle the most important Opportunities & threats
5. Strategic Initiatives – major areas of strategic action
6. Action Plan – tangible action steps that define:
  - **Who** needs to be involved?
  - **What** needs to be done?
  - **When** does each step need to be done?
  - At what **cost**?
  - Where will the **money and other resources** come from?
7. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Revision

## **Timeline for the Strategic Plan Update**

The following timeline was developed:

- July 2003 – kick off the planning process with Town Council
- Summer 2003 – train a group of volunteer citizen facilitators to help with the public input process
- October 2003 – engage members of the other four boards that help Town Council govern the Town in the planning process (Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and ABC Board)
- November 2003-February 2004 – conduct a citizen survey and stakeholder group input process
  - Note: the **Post Card Citizen Survey Report** is available at Fletcher Town Hall for public review.
- March 2004 – present a draft plan update to the five Town boards, and initiate a public review process
- April 2004 – Town Council sets a May, 2004 public hearing
- May 2004 – public hearing postponed to June 2004 to allow additional time to prepare the Action Plan
- June 2004 – public hearing and first opportunity for plan adoption by Town Council

## Overall Findings and Observations

Here are a few key findings and observations that emerged during the process of updating the strategic plan:

1. Growth in and around Fletcher has continued at a rapid pace
2. Several significant external events, forces and trends have occurred or continued since completion of the 1999 strategic plan:
  - The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks
  - The current recession
  - A substantial increase in the number of industrial plant layoffs and closings
  - The war in Iraq
  - The state budget crisis of 2001-2003
  - The incorporation of the Town of Mills River in 2003
3. The Town has made significant progress in implementing its 1999 strategic plan. Accomplishments include:
  - An approved Heart of Fletcher (HOF) plan, including development guidelines, and a Brownfields project;
  - Greenways, sidewalks, and a transportation plan;
  - US25 Improvements, zoning revisions, and technical review;
  - Creation of the Fletcher Area Business Association; and
  - A water and sewer rate study.
4. In addition to the above accomplishments, substantial activity has been going on “in the background” that may not be apparent to many citizens:
  - a) Progress is being made on the Heart of Fletcher project. The Town has leveraged grant resources through the Land-of-Sky Regional Council to assess contaminant levels, develop a site cleanup plan, and get a Brownfields agreement signed by the State of North Carolina to allow use of the HOF site.
  - b) A Parks & Recreation Master Plan and a rewrite of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations are underway.
  - c) A housing study was completed in 2003.
  - d) The Town has established a website, <http://www.town-of-fletcher-nc.com/> to improve citizen information on the Town’s projects.
5. Several issues noted in the 1999 plan are of more critical importance due to some of the findings stated above. These issues are captured in two themes that were mentioned in the December 2003 survey and by numerous participants in the stakeholder meetings:
  - a. Identity of the Town
  - b. Economic Vibrancy of Fletcher

6. Nearly all of the 1999 Objectives fit very well under the 2004 themes of Town Identity and Economic Vibrancy.
7. The 1999 Objectives stakeholders feel are of most importance in 2004 include:
  - a. Related to the Identity theme:
    - i. Walkability, trails, greenways
    - ii. Identity & increased visibility of Fletcher along Highway 25
    - iii. Central business district (HOF)
    - iv. Visual appeal and aesthetics of the town;
    - v. Gateways, landscaping & signage
    - vi. Recreation
    - vii. History & art
  - b. Related to the Economic Vibrancy theme:
    - i. "Welcome guide" for businesses
    - ii. Cooperative opportunities for local businesses
    - iii. Business interests included in Town decision making
    - iv. Leveraging resources for local entrepreneurs & small businesses
    - v. Public recognition of businesses that participate in planning & contribute to Town efforts (good corporate citizens)
    - vi. "Buy local" strategy
8. There appears to be less public interest in 2004 in the following 1999 Goals:
  - a. Influencing the provision of water and sewer in Town and along the Highway 25 corridor, water & sewer rates, etc. (perhaps because citizens or at least Town leaders have come to realize that the Town's control over water & sewer is very limited)
  - b. Taking advantage of the Highway 25 widening opportunity (not surprising, since the Town did a good job of this, and the widening is completed now within the Town Limits)

## **Strategic Themes in 2004**

### **Theme #1: Identity of the Town**

The Town of Fletcher is the fifth-largest municipality among 19 municipalities in Region B (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania counties), with a 2000 Census population of 4,185. It is the most rapidly-growing town in the Region, with a 1990-2000 population growth rate of 50.2%. It is the third-largest municipality in the booming I-26 corridor, being second only to Asheville and Hendersonville. Fletcher contains six of the 10 top industries in Henderson County. And Fletcher is now part of the new, expanded four-county Metropolitan Statistical Area established in 2003 by the US Bureau of the Census (Buncombe, Madison, Henderson and Haywood counties, with a combined 2000 population of 369,171).

But Fletcher still has an identity problem, and its citizens and leaders are well aware of it. The Town's 1999 strategic plan puts it this way:

*Also affecting business development and the local economy leakage, is the **lack of a distinguishable "business district"** to attract new and locally oriented businesses. As the Fletcher area developed, what is considered the business district of Fletcher -- the area along 25 -- developed in a way which made it un-distinctive and un-attractive as a business area. Lack of zoning and inexpensive land has resulted in a diverse and dispersed collection of businesses, little to no landscaping, and a lack of uniformity in buildings' appearance, location and direction on lots, and parking facilities. Mobile Homes, used cars, and abandoned buildings are familiar along the 25 corridor through the Town. "Town appearance" is a major concern voiced in community meetings and one-on-one interviews.*

The 1999 plan goes on to say, *The Town is using the Strategic Planning Process and a new set of Zoning Ordinances to better position itself to take advantage of the 25 widening in hopes of **improving both the look and success of the Fletcher Business District**. The Town Planning Board recently finished a Land-Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance for the US 25 corridor and other commercial sites which includes requirements for sidewalks, parking in the rear or sides of buildings, and landscaping, which it hopes will encourage business development while improving the overall streetscape and walkability of the Town. The Ingles planned for 25 at Airport Road is the first major new business which has had to meet new zoning guidelines. (Town of Fletcher Vision and Strategic Plan, Background and Update, July 1999, page 6)*

In 2004, survey respondents and stakeholders continued to cite the lack of identity for Fletcher as a concern. One stakeholder in the Civic Clubs, Churches and Schools meeting said he doesn't like not having a downtown center. Without it, there is "no downtown identity – or any identity at all, according to the natives." He also said he senses from some long-time citizens that they think HOF may never happen. In the Post Card Survey, the Heart of Fletcher was mentioned prominently among "Projects" in responses to Question #4 – "What would you like to see happen in Fletcher over the next ten years?" One of the top-ranked comments (as determined by sticky-dot voting) in the FABA-sponsored Business Community meeting was that part of the difficulty in "buying local" (i.e., availability of certain products, supplies in Fletcher) is that there is no strong identity associated with Fletcher. Asheville & Hendersonville are better known – therefore, people look for products there, and suppliers locate there rather than in Fletcher. The business group did note, however, that we can take advantage of the "recognizability" of the two larger towns and provide some geographic identity for Fletcher businesses by advertising ourselves as being "in the Asheville-Hendersonville area."

## Strategic Questions

Some strategic questions that help to frame this issue are:

- a. Who are we?
- b. Who do we want to be?
- c. How do we want to be perceived?
- d. How can our identity help or hurt us?
- e. How do we want to market our community?
- f. What are we known as – just a commercial strip between Asheville & Hendersonville--or a vibrant community with a recognizable character, “specialty areas,” and uniqueness?
- g. What does downtown Fletcher look like? Is there a recognizable and distinctive central business district?
- h. What are we known for? For example, residents say realtors have long used greenways, bikeways and “walkability” to describe Fletcher to prospective home buyers. The progressive nature of the Town is another selling point.
- i. How do you know when you’re coming into Fletcher, and when you’re leaving the Town? What physical and other characteristics tell you this?

## Identity-Related Issues Cited by Stakeholders

Issues and challenges cited in survey responses and in stakeholders meetings include:

### 1. **Housing affordability** -- who can (and can't) afford to live here?

The maximum affordable house price\* for someone making \$20,000 per year is \$58,710. Only one out of five homes in Fletcher is valued below \$100,000. For someone making \$35,000 per year, the maximum affordable house price is \$121,257. Yet the median sale price of new homes built in Fletcher in 2002 was almost \$150,000. 35.6% of Fletcher residents make \$35,000 or less annually. 17.5 percent of homeowners have an excessive housing cost burden.

Similarly, in the rental market, the maximum affordable\* housing cost for someone making \$20,000 is \$500 per month. For someone making \$35,000, the maximum affordable cost is \$875 per month. Over 28 percent of renters have an excessive housing cost burden.

\*Households devoting more than 30% of gross income for housing costs are considered to have a “housing cost burden.” (R. Genz) For owners, cost includes the house payment, taxes, and insurance. For renters, it includes rent and utilities.

Source: *Assessment of Housing Needs In Fletcher, North Carolina*, Richard Genz, January 31, 2003

2. **Turnover rate among subdivision residents** – anecdotally identified in the Neighborhoods stakeholder meeting as “about seven years,” this statistic has to do with the social fabric of Fletcher, and the commitment of subdivision residents to Town projects and identity. If a resident is not going to be here to see a project completed, they are less likely to be willing to support it financially, or to care about getting involved in the Town.

3. **The Highway 25 “strip” -- Lost between Asheville and Hendersonville** – the 1999 strategic plan captured the essence of this issue by saying, *There is concern both from business leaders and residents for the appearance of the Town’s business district along 25. When 25 is widened, there is concern that business will move in and make the Fletcher section of 25 indistinguishable from the rest of 25, particularly Arden and Skyland in South Buncombe County. The Planning and Zoning Board has just established some guidelines for how buildings can be laid out as well as requiring some landscaping and parking on the side or rear of buildings (so as not to interfere with the planned sidewalks). When 25 is widened, the Town has an opportunity to improve the over-all appearance of the business district, as well as to define it - providing gateways, sidewalks, and uniform signage and development standards.*

4. **“Old Fletcher and New Fletcher”** –Some stakeholders cited a historical perception of an “Us vs Them” mentality in Fletcher. Some characterize this as “Old Fletcher and Young Fletcher.” This is based upon the east side of Fletcher historically being the older, more rural part of town, whereas the west side of Town is comprised primarily of newer – perhaps younger -- residents in subdivisions. People in “Old Fletcher” remember the main reason the Town incorporated -- to keep the City of Asheville out. Had they wanted big government, urban services, land use controls, higher taxes, the argument goes -- then they would have let Asheville annex us in the first place. “We don’t want to be like Asheville” is said to be a common refrain in “Old Fletcher.” Conversely, under the “Us vs. Them” story the west-side subdivision dwellers are more likely to accept change, expect more Town services such as police, recreation, and greenways, see the benefits of land use controls, and be more willing to pay higher taxes.

5. **Visual appeal**, including signage to indicate not only when motorists are entering or leaving Fletcher – but perhaps suggesting a theme, such as “Historic Downtown Fletcher,” etc.

6. **A town center with pedestrian access** -- 2004 stakeholders echoed the writeup in the 1999 strategic plan: *While Fletcher welcomes businesses to move in with the widening of 25, there is also some concern that the 25 corridor not become another stretch of indistinguishable shopping centers of national chains. Rather, Fletcher would like to support local business people and smaller scale businesses, or at least provide some limits on how businesses are designed and how they look when they locate along 25. If the*

*Town can focus effort on planning and creating a “walkable” and pleasing-to-the-eyes business district, then the area along 25 will also provide opportunities for community building, business development, and social interaction. (Town of Fletcher Vision and Strategic Plan, Background and Update, July 1999, page 15).*

**7. Getting people involved** – the opportunity for interaction with other community members still means a lot to the stakeholders in Fletcher. This relates strongly to the above town center and walkability issues. If town residents spend their evenings dispersing to other communities in their cars for recreation, entertainment, shopping, and cultural events, it provides fewer opportunities for contact with neighbors, a lesser sense of investment in Fletcher, and less chance they will volunteer in the community or participate in local projects.

### **Why are the Above Identity-Related Issues Important – and Strategic?**

The Town stakeholders gave the following reasons why identity is strategic for Fletcher:

- It affects the social fabric of the Town, and the degree to which Fletcher maintains its sense of a small town community. In the December 2003 survey, 29 of 79 or 37% of respondents to the question, “What do you like about the Town of Fletcher?” gave answers like, “small town atmosphere,” “hometown feeling” and “small town USA.”
- It affects the ability of the Town to attract “core businesses” needed to stem the leakage of dollars from the Town’s economy.
- The housing affordability issue affects the ability of people working in Fletcher to live in Fletcher – thus increasing their commitment to the Town.
- It affects the ability of county and state industrial recruiters to market Fletcher as a good place in which to establish or relocate an industrial facility.

### **Theme #2: Economic Vibrancy of Fletcher**

The Vision Statement in the 1999 strategic plan says, “We...have a vibrant local economy,” and the list of related Values includes “a strong local economy.” (Town of Fletcher Vision and Strategic Plan, Background and Update, July 1999, page 9).

As a historical baseline for understanding this theme, here is a writeup from the 1999 Fletcher Strategic Plan:

*The Town began charging for **business privilege licenses** in 1996 and billed 114 licenses that year. In 1998, the Town billed 250 licenses, over a 54%*

change -- the number of businesses working in the Town has more than doubled in two years. Fletcher has businesses which range from large industries to home-based and hand-craft businesses. Most of the larger employers ship their goods outside of the Town, while smaller businesses market to area residents, such as restaurants, banks, and the Feed and Seed and Potting Shed, or the Hooper's Creek Grocery. The Town has seen an increase in inquiries for business location sites because of the widening planned for 25. There has also been tremendous growth in businesses in the South part of 25 between the Town and I-26, around the area of Smiley's Flea Market.

There was tremendous interest voiced among residents at Town Meetings, to develop more business activity which targets the growing number of local consumers. Currently, residents leave the Town to shop at the larger grocery stores and marts located just down the road in nearby Arden or Skyland, creating a tremendous drain or **"leakage" in the local economy.**

Also affecting business development and the local economy leakage, is the **lack of a distinguishable "business district"** to attract new and locally oriented businesses. As the Fletcher area developed, what is considered the business district of Fletcher -- the area along 25 -- developed in a way which made it un-distinctive and un-attractive as a business area. Lack of zoning and inexpensive land has resulted in a diverse and dispersed collection of businesses, little to no landscaping, and a lack of uniformity in buildings' appearance, location and direction on lots, and parking facilities. Mobile Homes, used cars, and abandoned buildings are familiar along the 25 corridor through the Town. "Town appearance" is a major concern voiced in community meetings and one-on-one interviews.

As part of Town Meetings, residents identified several businesses, business types, and things they would **like to see in their "downtown."** These were:

<p>"Specialty" Shops,          "Small Shops,"          A beauty shop,          More retail businesses,          Coffee house,          Bagel Shop,          Café,          More "small restaurants,"          Downtown offices,          Art Gallery,          Day Care Center,</p>	<p>Museum,          Recycling Center,          Grocery/supermarket,          Fitness Center with free weights,          Movie theater,          An "organized" shopping area,          Pedestrian friendly environment,          Areas to stroll and window shop,          Benches,          People on bicycles,</p>	<p>Bike Racks,          Clothing stores,          Taco Bell,          A local newspaper,          "Environmentally friendly" industries,          Place for town theater and music,          Plantings,          "Inviting" sidewalks.</p>
---	--	--

*The Town is using the Strategic Planning Process and a new set of Zoning Ordinances to better position itself to take advantage of the 25 widening in hopes of **improving both the look and success of the Fletcher Business District**. The Town Planning Board recently finished a Land-Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance for the US 25 corridor and other commercial sites which includes requirements for sidewalks, parking in the rear or sides of buildings, and landscaping, which it hopes will encourage business development while improving the overall streetscape and walkability of the Town. The Ingles planned for 25 at Airport Road is the first major new business which has had to meet new zoning guidelines. (Town of Fletcher Vision and Strategic Plan, Background and Update, July 1999, page 6)*

The above excerpts immediately suggest a strong connection between the above “Identity of the Town” theme and this “Economic Vibrancy” theme. Both are interdependent and interrelated.

Although the “leakage” issue raised in the 1999 strategic plan persists in 2004, two other areas of concern related to the Town’s economic vibrancy emerged in the strategic plan update process.

The second area of economic concern -- loss of industrial jobs -- is not limited to Fletcher or Henderson County – but, as a stakeholder in the FABA-Business Community meeting said, “The impact of a business taking a hit (e.g., a manufacturing plant closing) is greater in a small town because its ‘absorptive capacity’ is less.” The recent announcement of the closing of the Steelcase plant brings home to Fletcher the loss of our industrial base being experienced countywide, statewide and nationwide. This loss not only reduces the number of local high-paying jobs available to Fletcher’s citizens – but it also weakens the Town Government’s ad valorem tax base – which brings us to the third area of economic concern.

The third area of concern is the financial strength of the Town Government. The Town of Fletcher is faced with the following financial challenges:

- Maintaining the high level of services its citizens want and hold in high regard;
- Expanding those services and infrastructure to keep up with the rapid rate of growth the Town is experiencing;
- Implementing elements of the Town’s vision, including the Heart of Fletcher, greenways, trails, recreation facilities, signage, etc.
- Being able to leverage the resources to influence where and how growth occurs.

In the “Issues” and “SWOT” sections below, we will examine the Town’s financial challenges in more detail.

## Strategic Questions

Some strategic questions that help to frame this issue are:

- 1 How can the Town attract the core business services it needs? As one stakeholder in the Neighborhoods Stakeholders meeting put it, “Does this area between Hendersonville and Asheville have the ‘economic gravity’ to have a real, structural town? In order to know this, we need input from outside chain businesses & their marketing plans.”
- 2 Can we maintain high-paying jobs in Fletcher?
- 3 Can we stem the leakage of \$\$ and people out of town?
- 4 Can our Town Government afford to make critical investments in infrastructure, recreation facilities, and other services?
- 5 How serious are the jurisdictional limitations to our growth?
- 6 Can the Town attract the core businesses it needs and still maintain development standards that provide the identity and walkability stakeholders desire?
- 7 How can the Town enhance its revenue sources within the limits of an acceptable ad valorem tax rate?

## Economic Issues Cited by Stakeholders

1. **Retail and wholesale “leakage” of dollars out of the local economy** -- In the 2004 stakeholder input meetings, several people raised continued concerns about not being able to do some of their “core shopping” – both for services and supplies they need for their small businesses, as well as personal and family needs. One person in the FABA-sponsored Business Community Stakeholder meeting said, “There is no big office supply store in Fletcher. This means I must leave Fletcher to purchase office supplies. Then -- once in Asheville or Hendersonville – I do all my shopping there – for personal and business needs, because I don’t want to do a bit here, a bit there. I want to get it all done at once. So, in order to reduce trips, I end up bypassing Fletcher businesses. My personal and business spending goes to other communities.” This personal account lays out the continuing issue of “leakage” very well, and was echoed by others as well.

Another stakeholder in the FABA-sponsored stakeholder meeting said, “We need attractions to draw people/customers to Fletcher – for example:

- a. A movie theater
- b. Restaurants
- c. A high-end grocery (high quality meats, like a Fresh Market)

In a meeting of an ad hoc Environmental Scan Panel assembled to review opportunities and threats facing the Town, the “leakage” issue was tied for “most

important” with issue #2 below, “Balance of Business.” The Panel members were concerned that residents must leave the Town to do basic things:

- No pharmacy
- Only have had a grocery for 4 years
- Only 2 doctors
- No auto parts
- No chain sit-down restaurants like Applebee’s
- No clothing/mall type stores

**2. Balance of Business in Town** – The Environmental Scan Panel cited the balance of industrial and commercial business in Fletcher as being tied with “leakage” as to their importance to the Town. More industry creates higher-paying jobs. The Town of Fletcher has 6 of the top 10 industries in Henderson County, due to its flat land and infrastructure. These are viable industries – although the 2004 announcement of the closing of the Steelcase plant shows that they are not immune from global economic pressures. The Borg Warner expansion was a success – it created 10 more jobs & \$4/hour higher wages than anticipated. Town incentives helped to make it happen. There are still opportunities for more industry. An example is along L.A. White Drive in the Cane Creek Industrial Drive area. The L.A. White property – (100 acres?) is currently unsewered, but not in floodway; in fact, part of it is not in the floodplain at all. There are also lots of opportunities for commercial growth – for example, on US 25 -- that can help keep local dollars in Fletcher.

In his summary of the November, 2003 Industrial Forum stakeholder session held at Arvin-Meritor, Town Manager Craig Honeycutt concluded the following:

“Overall, our industries are concerned with outside pressures, not Town pressures. They need to find ways to lower costs to continue to be competitive. The issue of finding sites for their vendors and suppliers is a key to those in attendance. They are concerned with air quality issues; want an EMS unit in Town; and would like to see us promoting industry (not just tourism) within our community.” The industry representatives present desired to see the Town maintain a balance of growth between industrial and residential, as well as a balance of Town services to these two sectors.

**3. Financial Strength of the Town Government** – this is the third key strategic economic issue raised in the strategic plan update. The Town depends heavily upon ad valorem or property taxes to fund its operational activities as well as its capital projects. Fletcher’s current tax rate per \$100 of property valuation is \$.25. Each one-cent increase in the tax rate raises about \$75,000.

- Ad Valorem Taxes -- Where Does Fletcher Rank?

The Town of Fletcher has one of the lowest tax rates for towns in its population range in North Carolina. In a November 19, 2003 memo from Administration

Secretary/Deputy Tax Collector Cathy Loth to Town Manager Craig Honeycutt: “The North Carolina League of Municipalities surveyed 547 municipalities, getting a response from 544. Of those 544 municipalities, 31 have a population between 5,000 and 7,500. One of these 31 municipalities has a tax rate of \$0.00. Of the 30 remaining municipalities in this category, five have a tax rate of less than \$0.25. The 30 municipalities with tax rates and populations between 5,000 and 7,500 have an average tax rate of \$0.40.” This data is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparative Data on Ad Valorem Tax Rates of North Carolina Municipalities in the Population Range 5,000 – 7,500

<b>Statistic</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Total # municipalities surveyed	547	100%
Municipalities responding	544	99.45% response rate
Municipalities between 5,000 – 7,500	31	5.7% of respondents
Municipalities with Tax Rate = \$0.00	1	3.2% of respondents in TOF's population range
Municipalities that levy taxes (non-zero tax rate)	30	96.8% of respondents in TOF's population range
Municipalities with Tax Rate < \$0.25	5	16.1% of respondents in TOF's population range
Municipalities with Tax Rate = or > \$0.25	25	80.6% of respondents in TOF's population range
Average tax rate of the 30 municipalities that levy taxes (non-zero tax rate)	\$0.40	

Source: November 19, 2003 memo from Cathy Loth to Craig Honeycutt

### **Why are the Above Economic Issues Important – and Strategic?**

As discussed above, the economic vibrancy of Fletcher affects – and is affected by – all sectors of the community:

- Individual citizens and families
- The business community
  - Small Businesses
  - Industries
- The Town Government

The “leakage” issue (lack of core shopping and services in Fletcher) affects many things:

- It reduces sales tax revenues which the Town Government receives back from the State;
- It creates the need for more driving, wasted time, traffic congestion and air quality problems as people drive out of Fletcher to meet some of their basic personal and business needs;
- It makes it more difficult for prospective business owners to locate in Fletcher due to greater distance to their suppliers;
- It reduces the time Fletcher’s citizens have to participate in Town projects, civic life, recreation, and social connections in Town;
- It provides a less-attractive setting for industrial suppliers or new industry that may be considering a move to Fletcher;
- It reduces the ability of the Town to derive revenues from local people from surrounding communities who are visiting Fletcher for recreation, sports events, etc. – as well as from tourists and business travelers staying in local motels and hotels.

The “Balance of Business” issue is strategic because the Town needs both to retain its industrial base and spur commercial growth to increase its tax base. High-paying industrial jobs are important to the Town’s citizens seeking to keep up with rising housing prices and other costs of living.

The Town must have commercial development. Commercial development, via sales tax, spurs industrial growth – which in turn spurs residential growth. The more commercial growth we have (such as commercial chains/restaurants, etc) will spur growth industrially, as we become a place where industries can do business -- but not have to travel for normal daily needs (such as restaurants/pharmacies/etc). In turn, industries will need places for their workers to live - which spurs residential growth. Actually, the above argument can be put in any order (the more residents, the more commercial -- then the more industrial, for example) -- and it still works. The Town Manager feels the most important thing is that these three types of economic activity all are part of an "iron triangle" and each one is dependent upon the other for growth. If we are missing a piece of the triangle, then the other pieces can occur, but much more slowly. Thus, it is of utmost strategic importance for the Town to put a strong focus on all three sectors, not just one or two.

Without the financial strength to provide and expand services, provide infrastructure for the Heart of Fletcher, and manage the Town’s growth, the Town Government will be in a strategically weak position.

Financial strength is of particular strategic significance when one looks at the limited opportunities for growth of the Town’s corporate limits due to the geographic position of other jurisdictions. These limit the Town’s ability to

increase its tax base, ad valorem tax revenues and consequently its financial strength. Fletcher cannot annex north into Buncombe County. The Town of Mills River, the City of Asheville (Asheville Regional Airport) block Fletcher to the west. The Town exercises some Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) to the east, with no municipalities blocking in that direction. But annexing into the County's Rural Conservation (RC) zoning district is not attractive due to the much lower density of dwelling units (DU) per acre allowed in RC-3 (1 DU per acre), compared to adjacent Town zoning of 9500 sq ft, or about 3-4 DU per acre. Many Hoopers Creek residents do not want the higher density Town zoning would require.

To the southeast of Fletcher, the Town has several satellite annexation areas that need to be tied together, but other issues affect annexation prospects there. Defensive annexation is not an issue in the southeast. To the southwest of Fletcher, the Town of Mills River comes east to the French Broad River.

## **Interrelationship Between the Two Main Themes**

As mentioned above, there is strong connection between the "Identity of the Town" theme and the "Economic Vibrancy" theme. Both are interdependent and interrelated. For this reason, **the remainder of this strategic plan update does not distinguish between the two themes as it lays out the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), Strategic Initiatives and Action Plan.**

## **Opportunities, Threats, Strengths and Weaknesses**

Strategic planning requires a look at the environment outside of the Town (Opportunities and Threats), as well as an internal "reality check" on the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Town as to its ability to solve the strategic challenges posed above. For example, certain *opportunities* to solve the retail leakage problem may be timely, and others may not be. Certain *threats* to the Town's economic integrity may be so important as to require immediate action, whereas others may not. Similarly, certain strategic actions may be very feasible for the Town because of a political *strength* it currently enjoys. And other would-be strategic moves may be infeasible because of the Town's *weakness* of not having the capital resources to leverage a recreation grant.

This section of the strategic plan update summarizes the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that arose during the planning process, related to the strategic issues at hand. In strategic planning, this is called a "SWOT analysis."

The SWOT analysis is organized as follows:

- Opportunities/Threats/Strengths/Weaknesses are listed in five categories that correspond to the five Strategic Initiatives:
  - Business, Industrial & Residential Growth (relates primarily to "Iron Triangle" initiative)
  - HOE (relates primarily to Heart of Fletcher initiative)

- Town Financial Strength (relates primarily to Town Financial Strength initiative)
- Existing Business Support (relates primarily to Existing Business Support initiative)
- Community Parks & Greenways (relates primarily to Community Parks & Greenways initiative)

Any additional Opportunities, etc. that relate primarily to Support Strategies SS1, SS2, SS# and SS4 are listed next, followed by any “Miscellaneous” items.

- Note that many of the SWOT items relate to more than one Strategic Initiative

## **Opportunities**

### Primarily Related to Business, Industrial & Residential Growth/“Iron Triangle”

1. The following new permits that have been applied for in Fletcher:
  - CVS pharmacy
  - Doctor’s office
  - Possibly another pharmacy
  - Goodwill Industries
2. Opportunities for commercial growth inside Town limits (via the “iron triangle” concept of balanced growth)
3. Opportunities for industrial expansion inside Town limits (L.A. White drive, for example) (via the “iron triangle” concept of balanced growth)
4. Opportunity to move suppliers of our industries to Town (like Steelcase did)
5. Piedmont Interstate’s stated interest in helping the Town grow industry (including available land adjacent to its Airport Road site)
6. Strong residential growth (via the “iron triangle” concept of balanced growth)
7. WNC Agricultural Center
8. Airport
9. Vacant industrial sites in Town
10. Airport Road development in Buncombe County (O and T)
11. Opportunity to generate additional traffic and getting these drivers to stop & spend \$\$ in TOF
12. Opportunity to capitalize on tourism (hiking in National Forest, outfitting, Diamond Brand, etc.)

### Primarily Related to HOF

1. Brownfields grants
2. Opportunity to take advantage of the “recognizability” of Asheville and Hendersonville for purposes of marketing Fletcher and its businesses

3. Opportunity for a downtown Fletcher after-school program to draw parents together and raise our socialization level
4. Opportunity to market Fletcher for its connection to outdoor activities (climbing wall? National Forest?)
5. Cultural opportunities in HOF:
  - o Amphitheater
  - o Chataqua Institute approach (residential with big amphitheater in center -- lectures, music)
  - o Brevard Music center model
6. Educational opportunities in HOF:
  - o Move Library there
  - o Possible Blue Ridge Community College satellite there
7. Windsor-Aughtry's 90-day due diligence on HOF site
8. Opportunity to enhance Fletcher's image via gateway signage
  - o Possibly use thematic signage such as "Historic Downtown Fletcher"
  - o Show Kiwanis & Oddfellows service clubs on signs
9. Opportunity to have a Community College campus in or near HOF (especially one focused upon an emerging technology that represents "the next big economic opportunity" for TOF)
10. Opportunity to structure broadband service in TOF as a public-private partnership in which the Town resells broadband service
11. Potential opportunity afforded by proximity of the path of Rep. Taylor's ERC broadband project to Fletcher (i.e., the project to connect Asheville to the metaPOP in Greenville, SC)
12. Potential opportunity related to the supercomputing center in Asheville + weather data center

#### Primarily Related to Town Financial Strength

1. Good potential for growth/business expansion in the larger area around Fletcher (including Mills River)
2. TEA-21 transportation law
3. Homeland Security (re: funding)
4. New development creating increased demand upon Town infrastructure and services (O and T)
5. Zoning and planning issues (re: opportunity to use land use regulation strategically to manage growth)
6. State budget more stable than in recent years (actually the reduction of a threat)
7. The positive report in the FABA meeting that Hendersonville recently passed a 2-cent per \$100 referendum to fund sidewalks
8. Opportunity to use grant funds to leverage other grant funds via "packaging"
9. Opportunity to submit a local bill for an additional 3% Local Occupancy Tax for Fletcher

### Primarily Related to Existing Business Support

1. Opportunity for local businesses & FABAs to self-educate on land development alternatives such as “co-opping” land purchases among two or more businesses via a business expo and/or forums
2. Opportunity to develop a comprehensive “networking guide” for Fletcher businesses
  - Such a guide could support a “buy local” campaign
  - Could be web-based
  - Like a “welcome wagon” for new businesses in Town
  - Would let entrepreneurs and other prospective businesses know if there is a niche for their business in Fletcher – and what support services and suppliers are in town

### Primarily Related to Community Parks and Greenways

1. PARTF (NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund) grants
2. Opportunity to continue developing Recreation Park and programming:
  - Dog park
  - Pool
  - Tennis courts
  - Summer day camp
  - Adult sports programs
3. Opportunity to complete greenway system
4. Opportunity to use volunteers and donated supplies, materials and equipment to construct greenways, playgrounds, community gardens, etc.
5. Opportunity to have greenways, bikeways, trails go past businesses to feed a positive cycle of more customers, more businesses, more tax revenues to fund more Town projects

### Primarily Related to Achieving Consensus on Growth Issues (Support Strategy SS1)

1. Opportunity to “get this issue on the table” and work toward resolving it
2. Opportunity presented by the current zoning & subdivision rewrite

### Miscellaneous

1. Incorporation of Mills River (re: opportunity to work collaboratively with the new town)
2. Completion of US 25 widening inside Town limits (O and T)
3. French Broad River MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization)
4. Redistricting by the General Assembly
5. Asheville is encouraging denser development (???)
6. Henderson County Commissioners

## **Threats**

### Primarily Related to Business, Industrial & Residential Growth/"Iron Triangle"

1. Globalization, NAFTA (global economic forces threatening our industries' profitability)
2. The Town being forced toward a commercial workforce (loss of industrial jobs)
3. Surrounding counties with job losses
4. Completion of US 25 widening (O and T)
5. Increased pressure on commercial and industrial property by residential uses
6. Industries not letting the Town know their needs, especially when the threat of closing is imminent
7. Some industries perceive news media as "anti-industry"
8. Industry frustration over lack of "one-stop" permit process for County-State-Federal permits
9. Airport Road development in Buncombe County (O and T)

### Primarily Related to HOF

1. Threat of increasing traffic congestion due to growth (and fear of same among some residents)

### Primarily Related to Town Financial Strength

1. TEA-21 transportation law (if not reauthorized by Congress)
2. Phase 2 Stormwater Regulations
3. New development creating increased demand upon Town infrastructure and services (O and T)
4. Adjacent jurisdictional boundaries (Asheville, Buncombe County, Mills River, re: reduced growth opportunities for Fletcher)
5. County Rural Conservation zoning district to the east of Fletcher (re: reduced growth opportunities for Fletcher)
6. The reported negative reaction in Henderson County to a \$.25 per tax bill per year assessment to pay for county greenways
7. Perceived threat of Phase 2 stormwater regulations

### Primarily Related to Existing Business Support

(none)

### Primarily Related to Community Parks and Greenways

(none)

### Primarily Related to Achieving Consensus on Growth Issues (Support Strategy SS1)

(none)

Miscellaneous

1. Possibility of another 911 terrorist event

**Strengths**

Primarily Related to Business, Industrial & Residential Growth/"Iron Triangle"

1. Vacant industrial sites in Town
2. Fletcher is centrally-located, has a high level of services, is easy to reach – in other words, Fletcher is an attractive place to live, work and do business
3. Fletcher has a low tax rate compared to Asheville (re: Ruby Tuesday's and other prospective Airport Road businesses locating inside TOF)
4. Positive comments about Fletcher's business climate at FABA –sponsored Business Community Stakeholder meeting
5. Good hospital accessibility (Park Ridge Hospital easy to get to re: attractive to business, industry, residents)
6. Industries and other businesses like Public Safety services (Police, Fire) – including the training on security, etc. they conduct
7. Proximity to Airport, I-26, US 25, Hwy 280
8. One-stop permit process for Town permits
9. Piedmont Interstate considers its Airport Road operation its best
10. Perception that housing prices – although high – are not as high as in Asheville or Hendersonville ("more house for the money in Fletcher")
11. No substantial barriers to commercial growth exist (with possible exception of setbacks)
12. Close to National Forest (for promoting tourism, hiking, etc.)
13. Existing outdoors retailer just north of TOF (Diamond Brand) (re: promoting tourism, hiking, etc.)
14. TOF corporate boundary is close to parts of Airport Road (re: Ruby Tuesday's and other businesses locating inside TOF)

Primarily Related to HOF

1. Fletcher is known for:
  - a. Progressive government
  - b. Actively seeking citizen input
  - c. Good services
  - d. Leadership in recreation
  - e. Landscaping & grass mowing along US 25
  - f. Dedicated staff of two people just for park maintenance
2. Progress being made – even if only "in the background" -- toward Town projects such as HOF
3. Excellent Fletcher Library
4. Existing "dark fiber" (fiber optic cable in the ground but not "lit up" for use) in TOF

#### Primarily Related to Town Financial Strength

1. Percent of Post Card Survey respondents who were positive or undecided about a Town property tax increase (23% said “Yes” [some with conditions] and 13% said “Maybe” [some gave explanations])
2. Response of business community representatives at FABA meeting who said “I’d be willing to pay higher taxes to support the right project”
3. Low tax rate
4. The town’s stock of highly-skilled retired volunteers (engineers, scientists, architects, plant managers, finance experts, etc.)

#### Primarily Related to Existing Business Support

1. Business community sees the ease of networking in the small town environment of Fletcher

#### Primarily Related to Community Parks & Greenways

1. Fletcher worked out a US 25 Cane Creek Bridge design with NCDOT that will allow pedestrians to cross the highway under the bridge
2. Bridge over Cane Creek has been set
3. Recreation Park!

#### Primarily Related to Achieving Consensus on Growth Issues (Support Strategy SS1)

1. Willingness of Town leaders to get this issue on the table & seek resolution
2. Several current planning efforts underway create an arena in which to broach this issue (strategic plan update, zoning & subdivision rewrite, parks & recreation master plan; etc.)

#### Miscellaneous

1. Floodplain Ordinance (re: availability of National Flood Insurance Program to our residents)
2. Dedicated Town leaders
3. Good Town management and staff (recognized as such by Town residents in the Post Card Survey)

### **Weaknesses**

#### Primarily Related to Business, Industrial & Residential Growth/”Iron Triangle”

1. Fletcher residents who work in other communities (re: “leakage”)
2. Increased pressure on commercial and industrial property by residential uses
3. Lack of core businesses in Town (re: “leakage”) – including service businesses
  - a. Movie theater

- b. Restaurants like Applebee's
  - c. High-end grocery like Fresh market
  - d. Bagel shop/coffee shop
  - e. More upscale shopping
  - f. Motels, hotels
4. Inability of the Town to provide tax incentives to industry
  5. Inability of the Town to provide suitable sites for Industries to locate their suppliers here
  6. Fire insurance ratings for industry not likely to go lower
  7. No EMS service in Town for Industries
  8. Air quality issues (problem for industries – non-attainment issues)
  9. Industry perception that tourism and retirement are promoted over industrial development
  10. Impact of an industry closing is greater in a small town like Fletcher (less “absorptive capacity”)
  11. Zoning setbacks are a possible barrier to commercial growth

#### Primarily Related to HOF

1. Lack of a strong identity for Fletcher (including most importantly, a walkable central business district)
2. Perceived high rate of turnover in Fletcher's subdivisions
3. Lack of awareness by citizens of the progress being made toward Town projects such as HOF
4. Perception of lack of progress toward bikeways, walkability and HOF
5. No “deep pocket” or “Daddy Warbucks” has yet shown up to fund HOF

#### Primarily Related to Town Financial Strength

1. Percent of Post Card Survey respondents who were negative or undecided about a Town property tax increase (43% said “No” [some gave reasons] and 13% said “Maybe” [some gave explanations])
2. Lack of control of the Town over water and sewer infrastructure and their placement
3. No water or sewer revenues for the Town
4. Unlikelihood of the Town ever owning water or sewer infrastructure
5. Low ad valorem tax rate (re: insufficient funding for capital projects and added operating expenses due to growth)
6. Lack of a Town Capital Improvements Fund
7. Low degree of control the Town has over resources and strategic forces:
  - a. DOT-driven issues
  - b. Market-driven issues
    - i. Including ultimate design of HOF
  - c. Floodway-driven issues, (e.g., putting a pool in Recreation Park)
  - d. No control over VFD
  - e. High sewer rates in the county
  - f. Little water service in the county

8. Lack of incentive for developers to install sewer lines in certain unsewered areas of Town (i.e., projects with low payback potential)

#### Primarily Related to Existing Business Support

1. High cost of housing, land and vacant buildings for business use
2. High land prices and poor land availability (re: small business expansion)

#### Primarily Related to Community Parks & Greenways

1. Perception of lack of progress toward bikeways, walkability and HOF
2. Perception of bridge over Cane Creek as a “bridge to nowhere”

#### Primarily Related to Achieving Consensus on Growth Issues (Support Strategy SS1)

1. Perceived differences between “Old Fletcher” and “New Fletcher” (re: reaching consensus on tax rate, land use controls, higher density vs. rural development, use of tax dollars on urban amenities, ultimate size of TOF, etc.)

#### Miscellaneous

1. Proposed playgrounds on leftover lots in South Chase never got built
2. We only heard from 10% of residents in the Post Card survey (216 out of about 2000 sent out)

### **Strategic Initiatives**

Strategic Initiatives are the major areas of strategic action in the Plan Update. Objectives are outcomes desired in each strategic initiative. Action Steps are the “who-what-when-how much money—where will it come from” tasks, the accomplishment of which will move the Town toward its Objectives.

The Impact-Feasibility rating of each item is shown in **[square brackets]** as follows:

- Impact rating (low-medium-high) first
- Feasibility rating (low-medium-high) next
- Example: “Objective B1 – Heart of Fletcher **[I=high; F=high]**” means this Objective was deemed of high Impact and high Feasibility by the Action Plan Work Group. This item plots in the upper right cell of the 9-cell Impact-Feasibility diagram, or “Plot.”

The Impact-Feasibility Plot is shown in Appendix A. The Plot is a device for determining the relative priority of various Strategic Initiatives and Objectives for implementation. Generally, those items plotting in the upper right-hand cell [I=high; F=high] are most suitable for implementation and therefore highest priority.

## INITIATIVE A – IRON TRIANGLE

(Balanced growth in the Commercial, Industrial and Residential Sectors)

### Objectives

- 1 Build tax base
- 2 Keep industry in town/protect industrial jobs **[I=high; F=low]**
  - a Add a Park Ridge Hospital EMS station in TOF
  - b Key action: zoning to protect land from residential development
    - 01 Requests for zoning changes
    - 02 Ease of permit application & processing
  - c Key action: community college
  - d Move industry's suppliers to TOF
  - e Promote TOF as an industrial location
- 3 Identify strategies for growth
  - a Commercial growth – C1 corridor **[I=high; F=medium-high]**
  - b Alternative land development standards to enable/encourage growth
    - 01 More flexible & creative setback & parking requirements
- 4 Add core businesses to slow the “leakage” **[I=medium-high; F=medium]**
  - a Core businesses will take more time to obtain than other businesses
  - b Businesses from outside of Fletcher (e.g., service businesses like Chef Michaels' & entrepreneurs) associate with FABA. They may need expansion space in TOF.
- 5 Consider incentives and/or regulatory tools to increase the supply of affordable housing units in Fletcher **[I=high; F=medium-high]**
  - a Employers can know that their employees can live nearby
  - b Zoning
    - 01 Inclusionary zoning is easy – but we need “the right developer”
    - 02 Also – surrounding homes will push up the prices of affordable homes unless deed restrictions are put on resale values.
  - c Habitat for Humanity
    - 01 Habitat program is very feasible and high-impact
    - 02 Habitat communities can be established on 2-3 acres
  - d Rentals – affordable rentals should be available in TOF also

## INITIATIVE B -- HEART OF FLETCHER

### Objectives

- 1 Heart of Fletcher Development **[I=high; F=high]**
  - a Complete a central & walkable downtown business district
    - 01 Like downtown Asheville or Hendersonville – but with a small-town feel
      - Live downtown, work downtown, walk to lunch, walk to soccer
    - 02 There may be a certain developer who wishes to work in this environment

- Possible conduct a “developer forum”
  - Perhaps piecemeal development is best (market parcels to smaller developers, but under a ”big picture” set of standards/master plan)
  - A marketing video – like the LOSRC “Sense of Place” video – could help (see below)
- b Incorporate business development infrastructure into HOF:
- 01 Physical infrastructure
- Fiber optic, high-bandwidth IT infrastructure, including Wi-Fi “hot spot” **[I=high; F=low\*]**
    - Bring affordable broadband to residents and businesses
  - TOF could resell broadband capacity
  - In addition to fiber optics, there is a lot of activity in wireless now (5-6 carriers). TOF could competitively bid & resell so hi-tech companies could afford fiber & wireless broadband.
  - Wi-Fi could reach 1-2 miles from HOF
    - TOF could become one of the first Wi-Fi hotspots in the region
    - TOF could then market “small-town/old-town feel with hi-tech infrastructure”
- 02 Educational infrastructure **[I=medium; F=medium-high]**
- Community College campus
    - Continue talking to Senator Dole about BRCC satellite campus
    - Possibly finish 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of new Town Hall in HOF for BRCC
      - Or put BRCC in new library in HOF (see below)
    - Also – Henderson County needs a new library & would like to build it in HOF
      - Possibly TOF donate an acre of HOF land to County for library
    - Community College capital projects must have approval of BoCC, since it is County \$\$
- 03 Marketing Infrastructure—marketing TOF
- Keep the excitement of being part of creating a new downtown going
  - Stay with HOF & market it. What is HOF?
  - Video (already working on this with Ernie Sigman)
  - Wi-Fi could enable TOF to market “small-town/old-town feel with hi-tech infrastructure”
- 2 Obtain R/W for Fanning Bridge Road extension by donation or condemnation
- a Fund with Local Option Sales Tax (see Support Strategy SS3 below)
- 3 Complete gateways & signage **[I=high; F=high]**
- a Easements in progress
- b Funding already is set aside for this

## **INITIATIVE C -- BOLSTER THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF TOWN GOVERNMENT**

### Objectives

- 1 Enhance operating revenues [**I=very high; F=medium-high**]
  - a To fund increasing services to keep pace with growth
  - b To fill any existing gaps in services
  - c Strategy: increase the commercial and industrial tax bases
    - 01 Example: annexing Continental Teves increased TOF's tax revenues by \$250,000 with little need for additional services
  - d Strategy: look at user fees for garbage & recycling in future
  - e Strategy: consider other value-added, user-fee services
  - f Strategy: revaluation (tax base is typically up 20%) provides a "catch-up" opportunity
- 2 Establish a CIP seed fund [**I=very high; F=medium-high**]
  - a Manager will propose a 2-cent per \$100 tax increase for FY 205
    - 01 Each cent increase produces revenues of \$75-78,000
  - b Roads/subdivision streets repaving program
- 3 Use grants more widely & effectively [**I=very high; F=medium-high**]

## **INITIATIVE D -- SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES**

### Objectives

- 1 Marketing & support infrastructure [**I=medium; F=medium**]
  - a Stabilize FABA
    - 01 New Town Hall plan in HOF calls for initial space for FABA
    - 02 TOF cease to be a major financial supporter of FABA
      - FABA should not be an "agency" of TOF
      - FABA must be independent of TOF re: zoning to avoid conflict of interest
    - 03 FABA is part of the teamwork approach to marketing TOF, etc.
    - 04 TOF could keep a cooperatively-shared database for local businesses
    - 05 FABA is the appropriate "actor" to implement most of the remainder of Initiative D
  - b Add FABA staff
  - c FABA marketing program
  - d Buy local campaign
  - e Networking guide
  - f Business forum
  - g Alternative ways to make land purchase & development affordable
    - 01 "Co-opping" purchases of land
    - 02 Other creative approaches to land development

## **INITIATIVE E – COMMUNITY PARKS & GREENWAYS [I=medium-high; F=medium-high]**

### Objectives

- 1 Use hub & spoke design concept
  - a Community Parks (hubs)

- 01 Parks & Recreation Master Plan
    - Meritor Park
  - b Greenways
    - 01 Greenway Master Plan
- 2 Continue Fletcher greenway system
  - a Grant funding
  - b Grassroots approach with volunteers & donated materials
  - c Corporate support
  - d Work in partnership with Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy to get easements for TOF greenways
  - e Work on one greenway at a time, until it is finished, before starting another
- 3 Business Component
  - a Locate businesses on trails to generate more customer traffic
    - 01 Primarily a HOF strategy
  - b Sidewalks in front of businesses also

## **SUPPORT STRATEGIES (“SS”)**

The following strategies are not major Strategic Initiatives, but play a role in supporting the success of one or more Objectives of the five Strategic Initiatives A-E above:

### **SS1 Achieve Community Consensus on Growth Issues**

- a Taxes
- b Regulation
- c Density – urban vs. rural
- d Ultimate size of TOF
- e Getting more people involved in Town issues

### **SS2 Use volunteerism more effectively**

- a Explore doing projects largely via donated materials & volunteer labor

### **SS3 Obtain approval for additional Local Occupancy Sales Tax in the 2004 Short Session**

- a LOST funding needed for TOF marketing video

### **SS4 Keep pace with the growing need for Public Safety services**

- a All the other strategies have Public Safety implications
- b Public Safety capacity must keep pace with growth of the Town and other strategies

## **Priorities and Action Plan**

The Town does not have the resources to pursue all of the above objectives simultaneously – nor is it the goal of strategic planning to do so. If the Town attempts to tackle too much too soon, several risks arise:

- The strategic plan may collapse “of its own weight;”
- Credibility problems with the public may arise due to a perception of Town “non-performance” of the strategic plan;

- Discouragement can set in at all levels
- By the time the Town gets to implementing parts of its Action Plan, they may be obsolete because so much time has passed and circumstances have changed.

Therefore, rather than developing a hypothetical Action Plan for all objectives, the Town took the following approach:

1. **Set overall priorities** among the above five Strategic Initiatives A-E, based upon their predicted impact upon the Town and the feasibility of implementing them. An “Impact-Feasibility Plot” appears as Appendix A.
2. **Select objectives for FY 2005** in accord with the overall priorities list, and with a mind to the logical order and interdependence of the different objectives;
3. **Develop a FY 2005 Action Plan** – these are the “who-what-when-how much money—where will it come from” Action Steps, specifying action targets for the Town’s upcoming Fiscal Year. Each year at this time, an Action Plan for the upcoming Fiscal Year can be established in concert with the Town Budget for that FY.

### **Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Revision**

A successful strategic plan does not end by publishing the plan document and assuming it will get implemented. Successful implementation requires several things:

- **“Sparkplugs”** – also called “Champions,” these are people in the community who are passionate about a certain part of the strategic plan, and are willing to volunteer their time and energy to expedite certain Strategic Initiatives and see that they get done.
- **“Icebreakers”**— this term came from one of the FSPU working group members. It is a special project or Objective within a larger Strategic Initiative which, when implemented, will “break loose” the entire Initiative – in other words, garner enthusiasm among the public and “sparkplugs” for the entire Initiative.
- A **designated group** – accountable to the Town Council -- to oversee implementation, tracking, evaluation and revision of the Plan (Note – this group is not responsible for carrying out the implementation of the entire plan – only for overseeing that process);
- **Tracking of implementation** – that is, documentation that the Objectives and Action Steps are carried out as planned;
- **Evaluation** – that is, to determine to what degree the implemented Action Steps are having the desired results in reaching the Objectives;
- **Revision as needed** – new or emerging Opportunities, Threats, Strengths and Weaknesses may suggest that the Plan be revised. A typical cycle would be to do this annually in the winter, so that any plan revisions could be worked into the Action Plan and Town Budget for the upcoming Fiscal Year.



# Fletcher Strategic Plan Update – FY 2005 Action Plan

June 14, 2004

Staff developed the FY 2005 Action Plan below based upon the priorities and discussion of the Action Plan work group in its April 15 and 20, 2004 meetings. More information on priority-setting and discussion points can be found in Appendices A and B. The order in which the Strategic Initiatives and Objectives are laid out below is not alphabetical by Initiative (A, B, C, etc.). Rather, the Initiative and Objective with the highest Impact-Feasibility rating (plotted position closest to the upper right-hand corner in Appendix A) is laid out first, then the next-highest, etc.

For consistency, the Action Steps for each objective below are structured around the following format:

- Where are we now on this project or issue? (*Baseline for moving ahead and for measuring progress*)
- What is the Town's desired outcome at the end of FY 2005 for this project or issue? (*Where do we want to be a year from now?*)
- How are we going to get there from here? (*Strategies & Action Steps*)
  - Is there an "Icebreaker" project -- or a "Sparkplug" person or leadership organization?
  - Who does what tasks?
  - When/ by when?
  - At what cost?
  - Source(s) of \$\$ or other resources?

## **INITIATIVE B – HEART OF FLETCHER**

### **Objective B1 – Heart of Fletcher Development**

- Where are we now?
  - Windsor-Aughtry is out of the picture as a developer of HOF
  - Finishing Gannett-Fleming Brownfields assessment
  - Marketing the site to prospective developers
  - Obtaining rights-of-way on Fanning Bridge Road Extension
    - DOT will then construct it
  - Working on TOF video
    - Will need Local Option Sales Tax to fund development of the video
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - Fanning Bridge Road Extension done
  - Brownfields assessment & remediation plan complete & approved by DENR

- Video possibly done
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - Is there an “Icebreaker” project -- or a “Sparkplug” or leadership organization?
    - Yes – marketing HOF & finding the “right” developer
      - Two options for development:
        - Single developer for entire site
        - Parcel out the development as smaller projects under a master plan
  - Three projects:
    - **Fanning Bridge Road Extension**
      - Town Manager & Attorney finish R/W acquisition
        - By early summer 2004
        - Cost: \$200,000+
        - Source: Town Capital Improvements Fund + Fund Balance
      - Town Manager & Attorney deed over the R/W to NCDOT
        - Early summer 2004
        - Cost: minimal
      - NCDOT construct the Extension
        - Fall-winter 2004-05
        - Cost: \$250,000+
        - NCDOT funds (no match required)
    - **Brownfields Assessment & Remediation Plan**
      - Gannett-Fleming Engineers complete assessment & remediation plan
        - Summer 2004
        - Cost: \$55,000
        - \$25,000 from LOSRC + \$30,000 TOF Fund Balance
      - Negotiate & sign Brownfields Agreement with DENR
        - Town Manager and LOSRC Brownfields staff
        - Fall 2004
        - Cost: minimal
    - **Video**
      - S&S Video of Arden
      - Complete by June, 2005
      - Cost: approximately \$20,000
      - Funding options:
        - Local Option Sales Tax
        - TOF funds

## Objective B3 – Gateways & Signage

- Where are we now?
  - Will sign easement with First Citizens Bank for North Gateway
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - North Gateway completed
  - (South Gateway is several years in the future)
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - Is there an “Icebreaker” project -- or a “Sparkplug” or leadership organization?
    - Yes – Greg Burnette of First Citizens Bank
  - Tasks
    - **North Gateway**
      - Town Manager contract for North Gateway sign construction
      - Construct gateway sign
        - June-August 2004
        - Cost (including easement): \$18-20,000
        - Source: TOF funds

## INITIATIVE C – BOLSTER THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF TOWN GOVERNMENT

### Objective C1 – Enhance Operating Revenues

- Where are we now?
  - This is an ongoing activity
  - Commercial development is on the rise
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - No quantifiable target, but this will be a focal point for FY 2005
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - Tasks
    - **Refinance outstanding TOF debt** of about \$1 million to obtain lower interest rate
      - Town Manager obtain Local Government Commission approval
        - June-August 2004
      - Town Finance Director refinance the debt
        - August 2004
    - **Consider possible future annexation** to enhance operating revenues
      - Staff & Town Council
      - Ongoing during FY 2005
    - **Continue working on economic incentive package for local industries**

- Industry commits to making private investment in facility + job creation
- Industry pays tax on incremental increase in value of facility
- Town pays industry an incentive payment that is slightly less than the incremental tax

### **Objective C2 – Establish a Capital Improvement Seed Fund**

- Where are we now?
  - Town Council in consensus to include in FY 2005 budget
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - CIP Seed Fund in adopted FY 2005 budget
  - Approximately \$150,000 in fund by January 2005
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - Tasks
    - **Financial tasks**
      - Town Council hold public hearing on FY 2005 budget
        - June 14, 2004
        - Two cents per \$100 valuation raises about \$150,000 per year
      - Town Tax Collector send out tax notices August 2004
      - Revenues collected September 2004-January 2005
    - **Policy tasks**
      - Town Manager write up proposed Capital Improvement Fund policy:
        - CIP funds will be spent on major capital projects (cost greater than \$50,000)
        - CIP funds used to leverage other funds such as grants
        - CIP funds not to be spent on operational or recurring capital needs like building maintenance, new vehicles, etc.
      - Present to Town Council June 14, 2004
      - Town Manager implement policy as approved by Town Council

### **Objective C3 – Use grants more widely and effectively**

- Where are we now?
  - Kodak American Greenways Award Program grant application has been submitted
    - \$2,500 maximum award
    - August 2004 award date
  - Planning Director is working on a NCDOT Enhancement Grant for St Johns Road sidewalk

- Estimated grant: \$100-200,000
  - Requires 20% match
  - Source of match: Powell Bill funds?
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - Conduct a public involvement “Day of Service” for greenway construction and use funds from a grant to buy a kiosk and picnic tables
  - Sidewalk on St Johns Road constructed
  - Improved staff knowledge of grants available and how to obtain them
  - CIP Seed Fund available to leverage grants for major non-recurring capital projects (Objective C2 above)
  - One or more additional grant applications submitted and at least one additional grant obtained
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - **Tasks/Projects**
    - **Kodak grant**
      - Grant application submitted
      - Award date August 2004
    - **Day of Service**
      - Note: this is a component of **Support Strategy SS2**, “Use volunteerism more effectively”
      - Hold day of service in Fall 2004
      - See Initiative E, Objectives 1-3 below for details
    - **St Johns Road Sidewalk**
      - Planning Director complete and submit NCDOT Enhancement Grant application
      - Award date approximately December 2004
      - Town Manager bid out sidewalk project
        - Within 30-60 days of grant award, if received
      - Construct sidewalk
        - By end of FY 2005 (June, 2005)
    - **Economic Recovery Grant**
      - Planning Director explore US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant for job creation, worker retraining, etc. based upon Steelcase plant closing
        - Possibly use SSED (Sudden & Severe Economic Dislocation) category
        - Timing – unknown
        - Grant amount – unknown at this time
    - **Brownfields Remediation Grant**
      - Planning Director, Town Manager and Gannett-Fleming Engineers seek remediation grant from US Environmental Protection Agency

- **Recreational Trails Program Grant**
  - Explore grant for greenway development
  - January-February 2005 submittal deadline
  - Amount unknown at this time
  - RTP cycle runs every other year
  - No match required
- **Recreation Park Streambank Restoration Grant**
  - Grant of \$219,000 from CWMTF (through NCSU Cooperative Extension Service) is in-hand
  - No match/no TOF funds required
  - Start project in August 2004
  - Finish by end of FY 2005 (June 2005)
- **Meritor Park Streambank Relocation Grant**
  - NCDOT EEP (Ecosystem Enhancement Program) grant of \$600,000 being negotiated now
  - For streambank relocation & rebuilding at Meritor Park site
  - Town Manager take conservation easement to Town Council for approval on July 12, 2004
  - Construction during winter 2004-05
- **Staff grants training**
  - Planning Director work with LOSRC grants staff to learn potential grant sources for TOF projects

## INITIATIVE A – IRON TRIANGLE

### Objective A3a – Commercial Growth in the C-1 Corridor

- Where are we now?
  - New commercial development is on the rise
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - Have an updated Land Development Code in place that is sensitive to commercial growth
  - Have a marketing campaign in place that markets the entire TOF along with HOF to commercial businesses
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - Is there an “Icebreaker” project -- or a “Sparkplug” or leadership organization?
    - Yes – FABAs and the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
  - Tasks
    - **Land Development Code**
      - Planning Director and Planning Board update the TOF Land Development Code

- Design standards, etc. sensitive to commercial growth
- Start early in FY 2005
- Public hearing & adoption of updated code by June 30, 2005
- **Marketing Campaign**
  - Support Strategy SS3:
    - Obtain approval of Local Option Sales Tax for TOF
      - Town Manager & Town Council work with legislators to introduce local bill in General Assembly Short Session now underway
      - Will know by July 2004 if LOST successful
  - Town Manager hire marketing consultant
  - Develop video and marketing plan
  - Begin marketing campaign/use of video by end of FY 2005 (June 2005)

## **INITIATIVE E – COMMUNITY PARKS & GREENWAYS**

### **Objectives E1-E3 – Community Parks, Greenway System & Business Component**

- Where are we now?
  - Closing out bridge project (paid for by NCDOT Enhancement funds)
    - Official opening of bridge early summer 2004
  - TOF has easement along south edge of Blue Ridge Metals property
- Where do we want to be at the end of FY 2005?
  - Recreation Park Phase 2 construction complete
  - Have an operational Greenways Committee in place
  - Establish new picnic area as “destination” at new bridge site
  - Obtain easements & funding for Cane Creek greenway segment
- How are we going to get there from here?
  - Is there an “Icebreaker” project -- or a “Sparkplug” or leadership organization?
    - Yes – the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and Carolina Mountains Land Conservancy are “sparkplugs”
    - Yes – Parks “icebreaker” is Phase 2 of Recreation Park
    - Yes – Greenways “icebreaker” will be Cane Creek to Mills Gap Road, Blue Ridge Metals, Recreation Park & new bridge area
      - Focus resources on finishing one major greenway segment to generate public enthusiasm

- Tasks
  - **Fletcher Recreation Park Phase 2 Construction**
    - Parks & Recreation Director oversee construction process
      - New baseball field
      - New parking lot
      - Re-alignment of soccer field
      - New pavilion
    - Start construction late summer/early fall 2004
    - Target for completion: late winter or end of FY 2005 (June 2005)
  - **Reconstitute TOF Greenways Committee**
    - Town Council appoint committee
      - Late summer 2004
  - **Picnic Area at Bridge Site**
    - Public opportunity to volunteer to construct new picnic site as a “destination” for new bridge area
    - Cost of labor -- none
    - Out-of-pocket costs for materials, equipment:
      - Hold to zero if Kodak grant is not awarded (see **Objective C3** above)
        - Seek donations of materials & equipment
      - If Kodak grant is awarded (maximum \$2,500) – use it on materials & equipment
      - Kodak grant award will be known in August 2004
  - **Cane Creek Greenway**
    - Obtain easements or purchase land in fee simple
      - TOF already has easement along south edge of Blue Ridge Metals property
      - Carolina Mountains Land Conservancy obtain NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund \$\$ to buy TOF’s easement
        - December 2004 funding cycle of CWMTF
      - TOF use proceeds to build greenway segment and put conservation easement on the land
  - **Future Greenway Funding**
    - Consider an RTP (Recreational Trails Program) grant to raise funds for a segment (to be determined) of a future greenway (also to be determined)
      - See also Objective C3 above
      - January/February 2005 application deadline
      - RTP cycle runs every other year
      - No match required

The above are focal Objectives for FY 2005. Following are staff comments on some of the other objectives that plotted on the Impact-Feasibility diagram as medium or low feasibility.

## COMMENTS ON OTHER OBJECTIVES

### **Initiative A, Objective A4** – “Add core businesses to slow the ‘leakage’”

- This objective is happening as part of the increase in commercial growth
- Is there an “Icebreaker” project -- or a “Sparkplug” or leadership organization?
  - Yes – FABAs and the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development

### **Initiative D, Objective D1** – “Marketing & support infrastructure”

- All FABAs strategies are ongoing

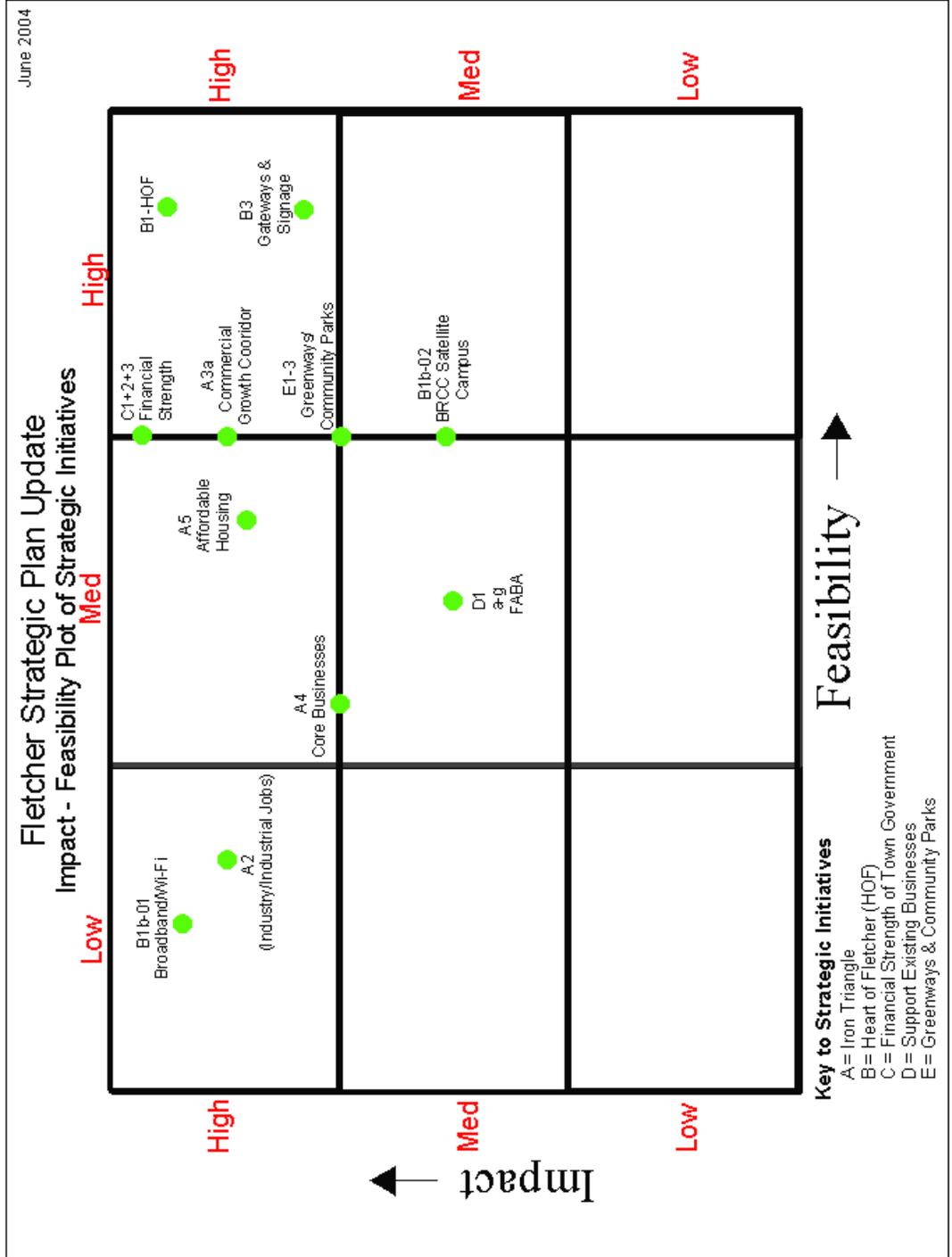
### **Initiative B, Objective B1b-01** – Physical infrastructure in HOF, broadband, wireless and **Objective B1b-01** – Educational infrastructure, Community College satellite campus

- These objectives are ongoing and run with HOF overall (Initiative B)
- FY 2005 activity will be research, checking opportunities, investigation only
  - Broadband
  - Wi-Fi “hotspot”
  - Technical training for job creation
  - Community College campus

### **Initiative A, Objective A2** – “Keep industry in town/protect industrial jobs”

- Plotted on Impact-Feasibility diagram as low feasibility, because TOF has little control over this
- Is there an “Icebreaker” project -- or a “Sparkplug” or leadership organization?
  - Yes – FABAs and the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
- **Objective A2a** – “EMS station” – County controls this, but leave in FSPU as desirable goal
- **Objectives A2f, g** – “Move industry’s suppliers to TOF,” and “Promote TOF as an industrial location:”
  - Continue collaboration with the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development (formerly Committee of 100) + AdvantageWest + CarolinaWest + NC Department of Commerce

# Appendix A



## Appendix B

### Proposed Strategic Initiatives – Notes on Impact-Feasibility Plot

(from April 15 & April 20, 2004 meetings of Action Plan Work Group)

The Impact-Feasibility rating of each item is shown in **[square brackets]** as follows:

- Impact rating (low-medium-high) first
- Feasibility rating (low-medium-high) next
- Example: “Objective B1 – Heart of Fletcher [high/high]” means this Objective was deemed of high Impact and high Feasibility by the Action Plan Work Group. This item plots in the upper right cell of the 9-cell Impact-Feasibility diagram.

Discussion points are shown in *italics*.

#### INITIATIVE A – IRON TRIANGLE

##### Objectives

- 6 Build tax base
- 7 Keep industry in town/protect industrial jobs **[high/low]**
  - a Add a Park Ridge Hospital EMS station in TOF
  - b ***Key action: zoning to protect land from residential development***
    - 01 ***Requests for zoning changes***
    - 02 ***Ease of permit application & processing***
  - c ***Key action: community college***
  - d ***There is room to grow***
  - e ***Our greatest strength may be TOF’s location + our good workers***
  - f ***Move industry’s suppliers to TOF***
  - g ***Promote TOF as an industrial location***
  - h ***Be careful to stay realistic about industrial recruiting and impact upon TOF workers***
    - 01 ***Steelcase had 900 employees – but most were not TOF residents***
- 8 Identify strategies for growth
  - a Commercial growth – C1 corridor **[high/medium-high]**
    - 01 ***Threat: Airport Road commercial development (outside TOF) will drain sales tax from TOF***
    - 02 ***Note: soon there will be 5 banks in TOF!***
    - 03 ***Banks & investors made downtown Charlotte grow***
  - b Alternative land development (practices? standards?) to enable/encourage growth
    - 01 More flexible & creative setback & parking requirements??
- 9 Add core businesses to slow the “leakage” **[medium-high/medium]**
  - a ***Core businesses will take more time to obtain than other businesses***

- b **Businesses from outside of Fletcher (e.g., service businesses like Chef Michaels' & entrepreneurs) associate with FABA. They may need expansion space in TOF.**
- 10 Consider incentives and/or regulatory tools to increase the supply of affordable housing units in Fletcher **[high/medium-high]**
  - a **Employers can know that their employees can live nearby**
  - b **Zoning**
    - 01 **Inclusionary zoning is easy – but we need “the right developer”**
    - 02 **Also – surrounding homes will push up the prices of affordable homes unless deed restrictions are put on resale values.**
  - c **Habitat for Humanity**
    - 01 **Habitat program is very feasible and high-impact**
    - 02 **Habitat communities can be established on 2-3 acres**
  - d **Rentals – affordable rentals should be available in TOF also**

## **INITIATIVE B -- HEART OF FLETCHER**

### Objectives

- 4 Heart of Fletcher Development **[high/high]**
  - a Complete a central & walkable downtown business district
    - 01 Like downtown Asheville or Hendersonville – but with a small-town feel
      - Live downtown, work downtown, walk to lunch, walk to soccer
    - 02 **Windsor-Aughtry's 90-day due diligence period is up today (4-15-2004). They are not going to move forward with HOF – more interested in residential development**
    - 03 **There may be a certain developer who wishes to work in this environment**
      - **Possible conduct a “developer forum”**
      - **Perhaps piecemeal development is best (market parcels to smaller developers, but under a “big picture” set of standards/master plan)**
      - **A marketing video – like the LOSRC “Sense of Place” video – could help (see below)**
  - b Incorporate business development infrastructure into HOF:
    - 01 Physical infrastructure
      - Fiber optic, high-bandwidth IT infrastructure, including Wi-Fi “hot spot” **[high/low\*]**
        - **\*Broadband Wi-Fi cost is expensive (\$1-2 million), making Feasibility low**
          - **But – Wi-Fi also produces a revenue stream**
        - **Bring affordable broadband to residents and businesses (add as a strategy)**
      - **Lots of excitement on Action Plan work group about B-1-01**
      - **TOF could resell broadband capacity**
      - **In addition to fiber optics, there is a lot of activity in wireless now (5-6 carriers). TOF could competitively bid & resell so hi-tech companies could afford fiber & wireless broadband.**

- **Wi-Fi could reach 1-2 miles from HOF**
  - **TOF could become one of the first Wi-Fi hotspots in the region**
  - **TOF Could then market “small-town/old-town feel with hi-tech infrastructure”**
- 02 Educational infrastructure [medium/medium-high]
  - Community College campus
    - **Progress Energy helping with this (??)**
    - **TOF submitting AdvantageWest grant for BRCC training for former Steelcase workers**
    - **TOF also talking to Senator Dole about BRCC satellite campus**
      - **Possibly finish 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of new Town Hall in HOF for BRCC**
      - **Or put BRCC in new library in HOF (see below)**
    - **BRCC can see potential in a TOF satellite campus – wants to do it**
    - **Also – Henderson County needs a new library & would like to build it in HOF**
      - **Possibly TOF donate an acre of HOF land to County for library**
    - **Community College capital projects must have approval of BoCC, since it is County \$\$**
    - **BRCC Board of Trustees are positive about these ideas**
- 03 Marketing Infrastructure—marketing TOF
  - **We must keep the excitement of being part of creating a new downtown going**
  - **We must stay with HOF & market it. What is HOF?**
  - **Video (already working on this with Ernie Sigman)**
  - **Wi-Fi could enable TOF to market “small-town/old-town feel with hi-tech infrastructure”**
- 5 **Obtain R/W for Fanning Bridge Road extension by donation or condemnation**
  - a **“Low-hanging fruit” that could be done quickly – add this to FSPU as an Objective**
  - b **Fund with Local Option Sales Tax? (see Support Strategy SS3 below)**
- 6 Complete gateways & signage [high/high]
  - a **Easements in progress**
  - b **The Mayor wants this(!)**
  - c **Residents will support this**
  - d **\$\$ are already set aside for this**

**INITIATIVE C -- BOLSTER THE FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF TOWN GOVERNMENT**

Objectives

- 1 Enhance operating revenues [very high/medium-high]

- a **To fund increasing services to keep pace with growth**
  - b **To fill any existing gaps in services**
  - c **Industries pay the bulk of TOF taxes – residential property taxes do not cover the cost of providing residential services**
  - d **Therefore, if TOF becomes all residential, we would need a 10-15 cent per \$100 tax increase to maintain service levels. Balance is needed.**
  - e **Strategy: increase the commercial and industrial tax bases**
    - 01 **Example: annexing Continental Teves increased TOF's tax revenues by \$250,000 with little need for additional services**
  - f **Strategy: look at user fees for garbage & recycling in future**
  - g **Strategy: other value-added, user-fee services?**
  - h **Strategy: revaluation (tax base is typically up 20%) provides a “catch-up” opportunity**
- 2 **Establish a CIP seed fund [very high/medium-high]**
    - a **Manager will propose a 2-cent per \$100 tax increase for FY 205**
      - 01 **Each cent increase produces revenues of \$75-78,000**
      - 02 **Industry leverage if taxes increase vs. user fees (??)**
    - b **Roads/subdivision streets repaving program**
  - 3 **Use grants more widely & effectively [very high/medium-high]**

## **INITIATIVE D -- SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES**

### Objectives

- 1 **Marketing & Support infrastructure [medium/medium]**
  - a **Stabilize FABA**
    - 01 **New Town Hall plan in HOF calls for initial space for FABA**
    - 02 **But TOF should back off being a major financial supporter of FABA (FABA should not be an “agency” of TOF)**
      - **FABA must be independent of TOF re: zoning to avoid conflict of interest**
    - 03 **FABA can still be part of the teamwork approach to marketing TOF, etc.**
    - 04 **TOF could keep a cooperatively-shared database for local businesses**
    - 05 **But most of the rest of this INITIATIVE D is in FABA's hands -- FABA is the appropriate “actor” to implement it.**
  - b **Add FABA staff**
  - c **FABA marketing program**
  - d **Buy local campaign**
  - e **Networking guide**
  - f **Business forum**
  - g **Alternative ways to make land purchase & development affordable**
    - 01 **“Co-opping” purchases of land**
    - 02 **Other creative approaches to land development**

## INITIATIVE E – COMMUNITY PARKS & GREENWAYS [medium-high/medium-high]

### Objectives

- 1 Use hub & spoke design concept
  - a Community Parks (hubs)
    - 01 Parks & Recreation Master Plan
      - Meritor Park
  - b Greenways
    - 01 Greenway Master Plan
- 2 Continue Fletcher greenway system
  - a Grant funding
  - b Grassroots approach with volunteers & donated materials
  - c Corporate support
  - d ***Outsiders are coming to our greenways – this means a high ratio of “bang for our buck” in greenway investment***
  - e ***The Greenway Master Plan has 13 miles of greenways – very important to the residents, especially in light of Windsor-Aughtry subdivisions far from HOF***
  - f ***Easements are the biggest barrier to greenway development***
    - 01 ***Carolina Mountains Land Conservancy offered to get easements for TOF – we need to work in partnership with them***
  - g ***TOF should work on one greenway at a time, until it is finished, before starting another***
- 3 Business Component
  - a Locate businesses on trails to generate more customer traffic
    - 01 Primarily a HOF strategy
  - b Sidewalks in front of businesses also

## SUPPORT STRATEGIES (“SS”)

The following strategies are not major Strategic Initiatives, but play a role in supporting the success of one or more Objectives of the five Strategic Initiatives A-E above:

### **SS1 Achieve Community Consensus on Growth Issues\***

- a Taxes
- b Regulation
- c Density – urban vs. rural
- d Ultimate size of TOF (just as a reminder = no Action Steps)
- e Getting more people involved in Town issues

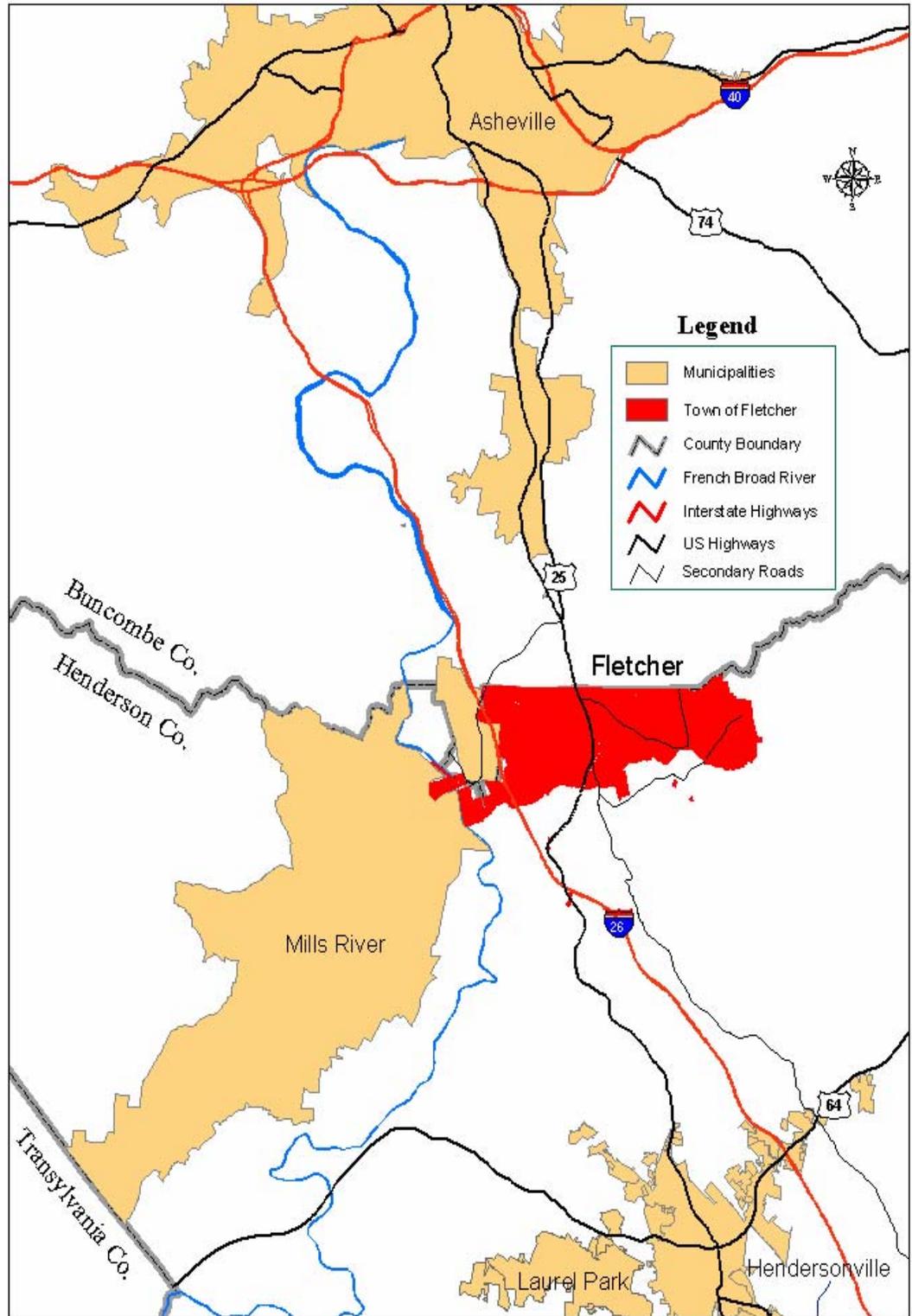
**SS2 Use volunteerism more effectively** (explore doing projects largely via donated materials & volunteer labor)

**SS3 Obtain approval for additional Local Occupancy Sales Tax** in the 2004 Short Session

- a ***Only 10% administrative charge can go to TOF's General Fund – the rest must be spent on tourism-related activities (promotion, public safety, upgrading of recreation facilities to fill hotels; etc.)***
  - b ***Buncombe County's local occupancy tax is at 4%***
  - c ***Henderson County's local occupancy tax is 3% (Travel & Tourism Department gets it all)***
- SS4 Keep pace with the growing need for Public Safety services**
- a All the other strategies have Public Safety implications
  - b Public Safety capacity must keep pace with growth of the Town and other strategies

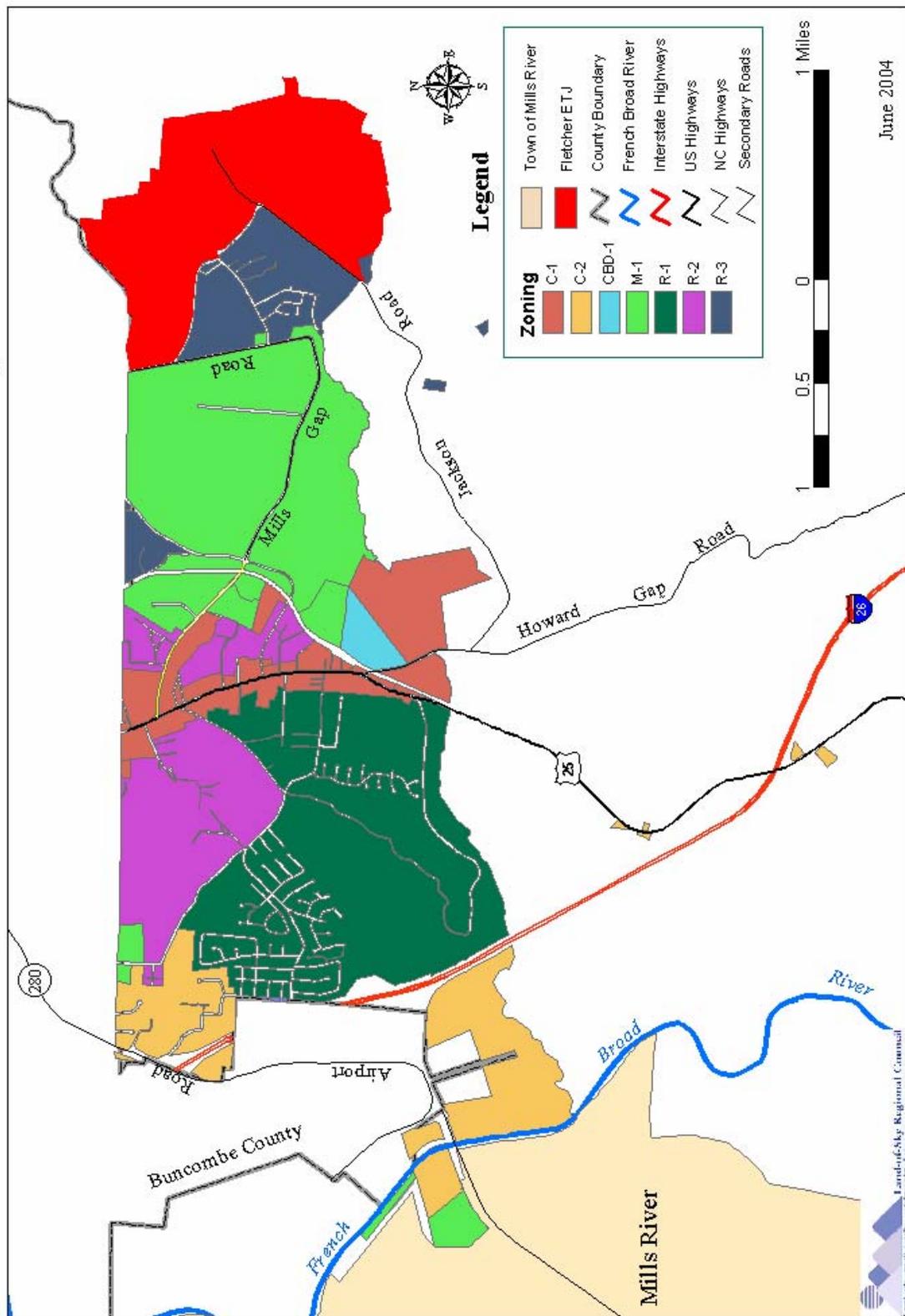
# Appendix C

## Town of Fletcher Strategic Location



# Appendix D

## Town of Fletcher and Surrounding Area



## Appendix E

### Town of Fletcher Strategic Plan Update **Environmental Scan Panel**

Tuesday, January 20, 2004  
3:00 p.m.  
Fletcher Town Hall

### **MEETING SUMMARY** Rearranged by **Number of Votes**

Note: blue highlights = research & data needs  
Ideas in red

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

Mayor Bill Moore  
Jim Denton (ZBA Chair)  
George Clayton (Planning Board Chair)  
Craig Honeycutt (Town Manager)  
Eric Rufa (Planning Director)  
Allen Corthell (Zoning Administrator, Fire Marshall)  
Ronnie Frady (Public Works Director)  
Jim Stokoe (Facilitator)

#### **PURPOSE OF MEETING**

This panel has two roles critical to the Fletcher Strategic Plan Update:

1. If our planning focuses only upon the day-to-day operations of the Town Government, we may miss **major strategic opportunities** to improve the community of Fletcher, or fail to identify threats to the community. A key role of the E-scan Panel is to identify such potential opportunities and threats (O,T).
2. An essential element of strategic planning is that our plans be **realistic**. We determine this by looking at the community's internal strengths and weaknesses (S,W) with which to act upon the above opportunities and threats.

The E-Scan Panel identified S,W,O, & T for the Town of Fletcher. The strategic plan facilitator will then research the issues identified so their potential impact upon our community can be factored into the strategic plan update.

Poster of 1999 FSP was in background for reference – no input was recorded on it.

## BRAINSTORMING OF OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

### 1 Balance of Business in Town (O)

#### a 8 votes -- #1 rank (tied)

- b More industry → higher-paying jobs
  - 01 Town of Fletcher has 6 of the top 10 industries in Henderson County, due to:
    - 2. Flat Land
    - 3. Infrastructure
    - 4. These are viable industries
  - 02 Borg Warner expansion was a success
    - 2. Town incentives helped – created 10 more jobs & \$4/hour higher wages than anticipated
  - 03 There are still opportunities for more industry (O,S)
    - 2. L.A. White Drive, Cane Creek Industrial Drive area
      - L.A. White property – 100 acres?
      - Unsewered, not in floodway
        - Part of it is not in floodplain at all
- c But – also lots of opportunities for commercial (O,S)
  - 01 Commercial growth on US 25 can help keep local dollars in Fletcher
    - 2. What % of the jobs in Fletcher live in Fletcher?
    - 3. Find out where the commuters go
- d Discussion –
  - 01 Trying to address via the zoning/subdivision ordinance rewrite
  - 02 Worked with AdvantageWest, NC Dept of Commerce, FABA, Greater H'ville Chamber
    - 2. Currently trying to improve relationship with these organizations
    - 3. Working on regional economic development with Buncombe and Henderson counties

### 2 Dollar Leakage out of Town of Fletcher (T or W)

#### a 8 votes -- #1 rank (tied)

- b Limited shopping opportunities in Town
- c Residents must leave the Town to do basic things:
  - 01 No pharmacy
  - 02 Only have had a grocery for 4 years
  - 03 Only 2 doctors
  - 04 No auto parts
  - 05 No chain sit-down restaurants like Applebee's
  - 06 No clothing/mall type stores
- d Discussion – Trying to address via the zoning/subdivision ordinance rewrite
- e Idea – match Lockwood-Green study to these needs

### 3 Water & Sewer is a Big Player (O)

#### a 7 votes -- #2 rank

- b It is critical to work with Henderson County
  - 01 Joint Advisory Board of Henderson County + City of H'ville + towns

- 2. Set up by LGCCA (Local Govt Committee for Cooperative Action)
- 02 Town of Fletcher will have more input on upgrades, locations of lines – this will help with our land use planning
- c Discussion – all we can do is to participate on the County Advisory Committee
  - 01 But all \$\$ invested become County dollars
  - 02 To be beneficial to the Town, we would have to own both water and sewer
  - 03 Probably not practical for Town of Fletcher to control infrastructure – this would only be feasible if we had water
  - 04 Seek help from Senator Apodaca on Cane Creek Industrial Park sewer line funding
  - 05 Continue to keep an eye on funding for sewer – e.g., NC Water & Sewer Bonds, etc.

#### 4 Zoning Issues & Planning

- a **6 votes -- #3 rank**
- b Issue: ABC Store in a dry county
  - 01 Affects more than just revenues
- c Issue: affordable housing (backfired)
  - 01 NIMBY (cheap houses, government housing)
- d Planning Board can't control it (market driven)
- e Beer sales in Naples
- f We need to think through the impacts of changes we make on surrounding people, communities, counties
- g Discussion – Annexation has been considered (Naples)
  - 01 Town Council must wrestle with this
  - 02 No ETJ
  - 03 Several satellite annexations

#### 5 Housing Affordability (T) or (W)

- a **5 votes = #4 rank (tied)**
- b PW (Public Works employee?) \$25,000 salary
  - 01 An affordable house for this person is \$60,000
  - 02 Therefore, s/he can't live in Town
- c St John's Commons – first houses were \$80-90,000
  - 01 Now the cheapest is \$160,000
- d Discussion –
  - 01 Trying to address via the zoning/subdivision ordinance rewrite
  - 02 The lot size approach we tried before did not work
    - 2. 20,000 square foot lots must drove up prices
    - 3. Need another approach to affordability
  - 03 Inclusionary zoning (requiring a certain % of new construction to be affordable) is another possible approach
  - 04 The Asheville Regional HOME Consortium provides opportunities to work with developers who have experience with affordable housing
  - 05 Barriers to affordable housing:
    - 2. Supply & demand

- 3. Costly lots → lead to higher-priced home → leads to NIMBY attitude to adding affordable units (perceived threat of reducing value of existing houses)
  - 4. A difficult challenge!
- 06 Benefits of affordable housing:
- 2. Ownership of homes by local workers
  - 3. Less commuting, with consequently less congestion, better air quality
- 07 Heard in town: “Modulars and trailers are the only affordable housing in the Town of Fletcher”
- 2. But – stick-built homes can be less expensive
  - 3. No place for Hispanics
- 6 Incorporation of Mills River (O)**
- a **5 votes = #4 rank (tied)**
  - b Future growth limits along 280
  - c Opportunity to work with neighbors
  - d Go 25 South instead
- 7 New Development = increased demand on infrastructure and services (O+T)**
- a Internal
  - b **4 votes**
  - c Opportunity to re-examine Land Use Plan
  - d Threat mostly around financial, strain on services
  - e Residential development (which doesn't fully cover new services needed)
  - f Traffic
  - g Widening of US 25 completed since 1999
  - h New community growth
  - i All Town services + County services (Police, Fire, Schools)
- 8 Moving toward a commercial workforce (T or W)**
- a **3 votes**
  - b Commercial pays \$7.00 – 8.00 per hr -- Industrial pays \$18 per hour
  - c We need a balance of jobs
  - d Research need: verify & quantify
- 9 Airport Road Development (in Buncombe County) (O+T?)**
- a External
  - b **3 votes**
  - c Target, Bi-Lo, Old Navy
  - d Traffic increased, more development
  - e Hotel spillover – affects Police Dept.
  - f Adjacent to Town
  - g Spillover (e.g., Rutledge Road)
- 10 WNC Agricultural Center (O)**
- a **3 votes**
  - b We need better relationship with the Ag Center
  - c Controlled from Raleigh
  - d Events such as the WNC State Fair are big draws

- e Impacts our hotels, restaurants – hotels are booked when the site is in use
  - f How could we utilize the site better?
    - 01 Busy on weekends, but not used weekdays
    - 02 Have entertainment there on weekdays?
    - 03 Opportunity for shuttle service from Fletcher to Ag Center
- 11 Homeland Security (O)**
- a **3 votes**
  - b Grants for CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) expenditures & personnel
  - c Probably the only federal agency with \$\$ now
  - d [Research – outline Homeland Security funding opportunities](#)
- 12 Increased pressure on commercial & industrial property by residential uses (T & W)**
- a **2 votes**
  - b C-1 & C-2 zoning districts now have provision to allow residential
  - c M-1 industrial district does not allow residential
    - 01 Arguments both ways
  - d Town stance on helping industries is very important issue (Eric)
  - e Town needs commercial & industrial to survive –we must maintain a balance (Craig)
  - f If we solve this one, it will create opportunities for expansion
- 13 Vacant Industrial Sites in Town (lots) (O+W?)**
- a **2 votes**
  - b Bad for recruiting (T)
  - c Reduced tax revenues (T)
  - d Suppliers & other new industries can occupy these sites (O)
    - 01 Example: Steelcase moved one of its suppliers onto property/into plant
  - e BMW model in South Carolina (O)
    - 01 But state incentives we don't have played big role
  - f Need commercial & industrial – back off residential development
    - 01 Saturated with townhouses
    - 02 We see empty plants – but no empty houses
    - 03 But if we restrict housing development, we'll drive housing prices even higher – this would be an unintended consequence
- 14 Airport (O)**
- a **1 vote**
  - b Now have flights to New York City & Houston
  - c Soon have flight to DC
  - d Town of Fletcher could become a destination for tourism, convention business
    - 01 Drive in early, stay in Town of Fletcher
    - 02 Convention Center discussed in past by private developer
      - 2. Possible Underwood Road location discussed – but Airport poses a building height limit there
      - 3. [Research – building restrictions, other possible sites, etc.](#)
- 15 Globalization, NAFTA (T)**

- a **1 vote**
  - b Effect upon our industries
- 16 Henderson County Commissioners (O)**
- a **1 vote**
  - b Planning, more progressive
  - c Trying to work better with towns in some areas
  - d Opportunity for land use planning, e.g., floodplain ordinance
  - e Opportunity for economic recruitment (e.g., joint effort to form industrial development commission)
  - f South Buncombe/North Henderson – take a more regional look
- 17 Completion of US 25 Widening (O) (also T?)**
- a **1 vote**
  - b Naples to Brookside Camp Road
    - 01 When complete, US 25 will drain traffic from I-26
  - c [Ask Eric, Craig, Allan -- impact of this upon Town \(?\)](#)
- 18 Phase 2 Stormwater Regulations (T)**
- a **1 vote**
  - b Will cost us – and everyone else - \$\$
- 19 TEA-21 Transportation Law (O+T)**
- a **1 vote**
  - b Affects funding for bikeways, etc.
  - c Bridge project (funded by TEA-21?)
  - d Opportunity for funding
  - e Threat = not reauthorized yet
- 20 Town Residents work elsewhere (“people leakage”) (T OR W)**
- a **No votes**
  - b People come to live in Fletcher – but their jobs are elsewhere
    2. [Research question: Where do they work?](#)
    3. Noted in FABAs stakeholder meeting: when people work elsewhere, they spend the dollars elsewhere, too.
    4. And – by logical extension – if they live elsewhere (because they can’t afford to live in Fletcher) and work in Fletcher – they spend lots of their dollars elsewhere, too.
- 21 Election Opportunities (O)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Political events at Ag Center?
- 22 County Zoning (O+T)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Opportunity to work with Henderson County & residents
  - c No floodplain provisions
  - d Rural Conservation District is 180 degrees from Town’s R-3
    - 01 This poses a conflict for expansion of County zoning
- 23 Surrounding counties with job losses (T)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Sets up competition with Fletcher for local jobs and affordable housing
- 24 Asheville is encouraging denser development (?)**

- a **No votes**
  - b Fletcher citizen survey says they want to be different than Asheville
  - c **Research need: compare density incentives & regs**
  - d **Research – see what citizens did say re: density, zoning in the survey**
- 25 French Broad River MPO (O)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Opportunity to get more planning \$\$ and more road \$\$
- 26 Redistricting by the General Assembly (O – we hope)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Our State Senator now lives in Laurel Park (much closer than before)
  - c Better ear to our needs
- 27 State Budget More Stable (reduction of a Threat)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Less concern re: the State withholding Town revenues
- 28 Brownfields Grants (O)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Be sure these are funded – Heart of Fletcher depends upon this program
- 29 Possibility of Another 911 Terrorist Event (T)**
- a **No votes**
    - 01 Affects everyone
    - 02 Still recovering from first one
    - 03 Everyone lost ground (local economies, etc.)

## **STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES**

- 30 Floodplain Ordinance (S?)**
- a **1 vote**
  - b Big change since 1999 FSP
  - c NFIP now (Town has it, County does not)
  - d Hazard Mitigation Grant funding enabled by Town's NFIP participation
- 31 Fletcher is central, high level of services, easy to reach (S)**
- a **No votes**
  - b Big changes since incorporation in 1989
  - c A good place to live