

# LAND USE PLAN

## TOWN OF FLETCHER



## HENDERSON COUNTY

## NORTH CAROLINA

*Approved March 11, 2013*

**Land Use Plan  
Fletcher, North Carolina**

Prepared by the  
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# Introduction

From the time of our incorporation in 1989, the Town of Fletcher has recognized the critical importance of planning for our future, and we are proud to have earned a reputation as a well-planned and well-managed community.

The Town adopted a Land Use Plan in July, 1993, which set forth nine (9) goals to serve as a guide for the preparation of future Ordinances and policies to fulfill of the then-projected needs of the community. That Plan states that "The planning period for this plan is 20 years. Thus its preparation will focus the town on important issues with which to deal through the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." We have now reached the end of the 20 year planning period set forth in that Plan.

It is appropriate that we re-state the nine (9) goals here, at the beginning of our re-examination. Throughout this report, we shall examine these goals, noting the ordinances and policies that have already been adopted, as well as future considerations necessary to continue pursuit of the following goals over the course of the next twenty year planning period.

1. To provide the citizens of Fletcher with a quality environment for living, leisure activities and work;
2. To provide adequate recreational opportunities for residents;
3. To prevent inappropriate development of identified flood hazard areas or other environmentally sensitive areas that might endanger lives, property or health;
4. To discourage the development of incompatible land uses;
5. To provide adequate area for expansion of the industrial base on the east side of town in the area around the existing industrial park;
6. To encourage low-density, single-family residential development west of US 25, and to a limited extent east of the industrial park;
7. To encourage the development of a governmental and commercial hub that would give Fletcher an identity point;

8. To provide for adequate expansion of commercial areas in designated commercial hubs rather than in continuous strips along major thoroughfares;
9. To develop a safe and efficient means of transportation that will provide ease of movement throughout the town.

# PLANNING BACKGROUND

In North Carolina, municipalities are granted the power to zone under G.S. 160A-381 *et seq.* All zoning must be "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Although the term "comprehensive plan" is not defined in the Statute, the terms "comprehensive plan", "land use plan", and simply "plan" have become interchangeable over time. This requirement helps to ensure that land use regulations address public purposes, as determined after careful analysis of long-term implications and in coordination with other programs, policies and decisions. In preparing Fletcher's plan, all existing plans (small area plans, neighborhood plans, transportation plan, capital improvement plans, etc.) are to be considered.

The Town of Fletcher adopted a Land Use Plan in July, 1993, which provided the framework for the first Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1995. That Ordinance was periodically revised and updated to reflect several annexations, the exercise of extra-territorial jurisdiction, and rezonings requested by various property owners. In 2005, the Planning Board undertook an in-depth analysis of the 1995 Zoning Ordinance. This resulted in preparation of a comprehensive Land Development Code (LDC), which was adopted by the Town Council in November, 2005 and effective as of March 6, 2006. Like the 1995 Zoning Ordinance, the LDC has been periodically revised and updated as necessary. These ordinances are intended primarily to achieve the fourth stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan: "to discourage the development of incompatible land uses."

The seventh stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was "to encourage the development of a governmental and commercial hub that would give Fletcher an identity point." This concept became known as the "Heart of Fletcher". In 1997, the Town began to formulate plans for the Heart of Fletcher to include a new Town Hall, along with commercial, residential, and institutional uses. This concept has created a great deal of excitement, as various plans have been prepared and presented over the years. Finally, in September, 2011, a "Heart of Fletcher Master Plan" was adopted, with implementing amendments to the Land Development Code enacted in December, 2011.

A Strategic Plan was adopted in 1999, and updated in 2004. That plan focused on a two major themes: the Identity of the Town and Economic Vibrancy, and proposed a series of Initiatives and Strategies to implement the goals and objectives related to both themes.

In 2000, a Greenway Master Plan was adopted, proposing a system of trails throughout the Town. A Stormwater Master Plan was adopted in 2007.

An online survey was conducted in aid of this Land Use Plan update. (Results of this survey can be found in Appendix 2 of this document).

# BOUNDARY CHANGES

The original boundaries of the Town of Fletcher encompassed 3,158.60 acres (4.94 square miles). Since that time, the Town of Fletcher has grown by an additional 925.42 acres (1.45 square miles) and now encompasses 4,084.02 acres (6.38 square miles), an increase of nearly 30%.

Our growth has been achieved through thirty (30) annexations, most of which have been voluntary. Of these, twenty (20) have been contiguous annexations totaling 856.83 acres, and ten (10) have been satellite annexations totaling 68.59 acres.

The Town also exercises Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction over an additional 535.80 acres (0.84 square miles) in the Hooper's Creek area, under an Ordinance adopted in 1999.

Table 1  
Annexations

Ordinance	Effective Date	Owner	Annexed Area	Type
0-92-3	9/14/1992	French Broad Golf Center	215.12	Contiguous
0-93-3	3/8/1993	Donald Rhodes	1.86	Contiguous
0-93-2	3/8/1993	Youngblood	1.42	Satellite
0-94-1	3/14/1994	Kasey Travel Plaza	1.88	Satellite
0-95-1	4/11/1996	Youngblood Oil, BGA Associates, Murphy-Wilson	11.58	Contiguous
0-99-3	5/10/1999	James Clayton	1.59	Satellite
0-99-6	7/12/1999	Henderson County - Westfeld Park & Cadgny	42.31	Contiguous
0-99-7	7/12/1999	Narcisse Cadgene	11.70	Contiguous
0-99-8	8/9/1999	Robert Gasperson	1.85	Satellite
0-00-1	4/10/2000	Gary Mills	0.98	Satellite
0-00-2	5/8/2000	David L Jarrett - Southern Tee	65.20	Contiguous
0-00-13	9/11/2000	Windsor Aughtry Company, Inc.	109.62	Contiguous
0-00-14	12/11/2000	William Martin	0.56	Satellite
0-01-3	4/9/2001	Richard W Baldwin	2.84	Satellite
0-01-4	5/14/2001	Meritor - Rockwell Heavy Vehicle Sys - Park Prop	95.25	Contiguous
0-01-9	8/10/2001	Edward Barnwell	3.34	Contiguous
0-01-10	8/10/2001	Charlie Messer	0.75	Contiguous
0-01-2	5/27/2002	Continental Teves, Inc.	38.28	Contiguous
0-02-6	12/11/2002	Franklin	2.27	Contiguous
0-03-2	3/10/2003	Windsor Aughtry Company, Inc.	45.36	Contiguous
0-04-3	4/29/2004	Buddy W Bagwell	14.90	Contiguous
0-04-4	5/10/2004	Kenneth G Bagwell	14.98	Contiguous
0-04-6	6/14/2004	Morgan Legacy LLC	17.35	Satellite
0-04-9	10/11/2004	Windsor Aughtry Company, Inc.	4.99	Contiguous
0-05-6	10/10/2005	Steve Constantinou	6.54	Satellite
0-05-1	3/31/2006	Fletcher Warehousing	81.07	Contiguous
0-06-5	4/10/2006	Brickton Associates, LLC	33.58	Satellite
0-08-01	2/11/2008	Meritor - Rockwell Heavy Vehicle Systems	70.54	Contiguous
0-07-2	8/7/2008	Christopher Covey	21.21	Contiguous
0-07-3	8/7/2008	Southern Concrete Materials	6.50	Contiguous

## *Future Considerations*

Fletcher's geographic boundaries will not likely see nearly as much change in the coming 20 years. The Town may not annex north across the Buncombe County line, as set forth by the initial charter allowing for Fletcher's incorporation in 1989. Fletcher is also geographically prevented from annexing to the west due to the Mills River incorporation in 2003. This, combined with changes in annexation laws at the state level, will probably mean that apart from occasional voluntary annexation requests, Fletcher's current boundaries will largely remain unchanged for the course of this planning period.



# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

## *Population*

An examination of US census data shows that the Town of Fletcher has experienced significant population increases since incorporating in 1989<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, our growth has far exceeded the growth rate for Henderson County over the same period. Table 2 shows that, while Henderson County's population has increased by 54% since 1990, our population has increased by 158%. Further, while Henderson County's growth rate declined somewhat from 2000 to 2010 (from 28.7% to 19.7%), our growth rate increased dramatically, from 50.2% to 71.7%.

Table 2  
Population Growth

Population (% Increase)	1990	2000	2010
Fletcher	2,787	4,185 (50.2%)	7,187 (71.7%)
Henderson County	69,285	89,173(28.7%)	106,740 (19.7%)

While we have experienced significant growth, it is important to note that the overall characteristics of our population have not changed. As shown in Table 3, our population still consists of relatively young families with children at home, as indicated by the high percentage of the population under the age of 18, which has not varied since 1990. The percentage of young adults (ages 21 to 40) has fallen, while the percentage of older adults (ages 41 to 65) has risen. The percentage of the Town's population over the age of 65 has remained fairly constant. Compared to Henderson County, our population remains younger, with a far lower percentage of persons over age 65.

Another indication of the Town's younger population is household size. As shown in Table 4, our household size has been, and continues to be, higher than that of the County as a whole, indicating more households with children at home.

Table 3  
Population Characteristics: Age Groups

	1990		2000		2010	
	Fletcher	Henderson Co.	Fletcher	Henderson Co.	Fletcher	Henderson Co.
Below age 20	718 (25.8%)	16,110 (23.3%)	1,050 (25.1%)	20,215 (22.7%)	1,794 (25.0%)	23,930 (22.4%)
Ages 21 - 40	954 (34.2%)	17,878 (25.8%)	1,374 (32.8%)	20,932 (23.5%)	1,899 (26.4%)	22,391 (21.0%)
Ages 41 - 65	819 (29.4%)	20,158 (29.1%)	1,337 (31.9%)	28,685 (32.2%)	2,493 (34.7%)	36,617 (34.3%)
Age 65+	296 (10.6%)	13,241 (19.1%)	424 (10.1%)	19,321 (21.7%)	1,001 (13.9%)	23,865 (22.4%)

<sup>1</sup> Source for all data: US Bureau of the Census

Table 4  
Household Size

	1990		2000		2010	
	Fletcher	Henderson Co.	Fletcher	Henderson Co.	Fletcher	Henderson Co.
Number of Households	1,135	28,709	1,744	37,414	3,008	45,448
Household size	2.46	2.38	2.4	2.33	2.36	2.32

## Housing

As shown in Table 5, Fletcher has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of housing units, due to the development of large subdivisions (Southchase, St. John's Woods, Livingston Farms, etc.) as well as townhome developments (Stafford Hills, Stafford Crossing, Townes at Connor Creek, Townes at Bagwell Mills, etc.). Our growth has far outstripped overall growth in Henderson County, increasing by 169% since 1990, while the County has increased by 60%.

Table 5  
Housing Units

Housing Units	1990	2000	2010
Fletcher	1,193	1,816 (52.2%)	3,208 (76.7%)
Henderson County	34,131	42,996 (26.0%)	54,710 (27.2%)

However; while the total number of housing units has increased dramatically, there has been very little change in the nature of occupancy. The percentages of owner-occupied, renter-occupied, and vacant units is still very much the same as in 1990. Also, as shown in Table 6, Fletcher boasts a higher percentage of owner-occupied units and a lower percentage of vacant units than does Henderson County as a whole.

Table 6  
Housing Units: Tenure

	1990		2000		2010	
	Fletcher	Henderson Co.	Fletcher	Henderson Co.	Fletcher	Henderson Co.
Housing Units	1,193	34,131	1,816	42,996	3,208	54,710
Owner-occupied	903 (75.7%)	22,021 (64.5%)	1,464 (80.6%)	29,487 (68.6%)	2,444 (76.2%)	34,143 (62.4%)
Renter-occupied	232 (19.4%)	6,688 (19.6%)	280 (15.4%)	7,927 (18.4%)	564 (17.6%)	11,305 (20.7%)
Vacant	58 (4.9%)	5,422 (15.9%)	72 (4.0 %)	5,582 (13.0%)	200 (6.2%)	9,262 (16.9%)

### Future Considerations

With the economic downturn of 2008, Fletcher experienced a noticeable decline in growth and development, especially in the residential sector. To date, this slowdown has continued and could be perceived as the “new normal” as it could take years for the housing sector to rebound.

And it still may not return to levels seen during the “boom years.” Therefore, it is anticipated that population most likely will not increase at the same pace as seen in previous decades. Fletcher’s current zoning allows for future infill development, with higher densities encouraged largely in the center of Town. Fletcher’s leaders and staff will need to monitor future growth rates in order to make informed decisions on future changes to the Land Development Code (LDC) as they relate to allowed density.

As noted in the Henderson County 2020 Comprehensive Plan, "formulating population projections is complex and uncertain. Many factors that are not easily predicted can affect the outcome of these projections." Given this; however, both the County and the State (through the Office of State Budget and Management) attempt to project future population growth. Adjusting and interpolating their data allows for an estimate of Fletcher's future population.

While Henderson County's Plan projects growth only through 2020, the State projects growth trends out to the year 2032. (This date coincides with the 20-year lifespan of this Plan). The State, however, only projects growth down to the County level, so we must combine the State's projections with the County's in order to use them to project growth in Fletcher.

For planning purposes, Henderson County breaks the County down into eight (8) townships, and projects population growth for each. (Fletcher is included within the Hooper's Creek Township in the County's forecasts.) The County's 2020 Plan predicted population growth of 2,856 persons in Hooper's Creek from 2000 to 2010, a figure which closely matches growth in Fletcher over the same period (3,002 persons) as reflected in the US Census figure. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that all of the growth that the County projects for Hooper's Creek township will occur within the Town.

Given this assumption, we can utilize the State's projections to formulate an estimate of Fletcher's future population growth.

	2010	2020	2030	2032
STATE PROJECTION FOR HENDERSON CO.	106,740	124,163	141,459	144,898
HOOPERS CREEK	12,809	14,213	16,317	17,233
FLETCHER	7,187	8,591	10,696	11,611

However, this estimate seems unrealistically high, given the lack of available vacant land for future large-scale development such as has taken place between 1993 and 2008.

Another method to predict future population growth is to examine the recent trend (since 2008) and to project that trend forward. The US Census estimates that our population has grown by just 1.1% since the 2010 Census was completed. If that trend continues, then our population would be 8,017 in 2020; 8,943 in 2030; and 9,141 in 2032.

As noted above, attempting to predict future population is complex and uncertain. An economic turnaround and/or large-scale development in the Heart of Fletcher could allow for major increases in future population, while a continued trend of slow construction coupled with a continued decline in average household size could result in a very stable population over the 20-year planning period of this Plan.

# NATURAL FEATURES

The third stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was "to prevent inappropriate development of identified flood hazard areas or other environmentally sensitive areas that might endanger lives, property or health." The Town has adopted Ordinances and policies that have met this goal. This section includes an overview of such areas, and the policies and Ordinances adopted to implement that Goal.

## Topography

The topography of the Town of Fletcher consists mainly of gently rolling land. The vast majority of land lies in the narrow elevation band between 1,900 feet above sea level (along Cane Creek) and 2,200 feet (along our northern border). A small area of land at the northern edge of our extra-territorial jurisdiction, however, rises above 2,900 feet, along the Burney Mountain ridgeline.

Topography does not impose any significant impediments to development, except in several small pockets of steep slopes. The Town regulates development of areas designated as Steep Slopes (Article 6.7 of the Land Development Code).

## Flood Hazard Areas and Wetlands

The Town of Fletcher is crossed by three main streams (Cane Creek, Kimsey Creek, and Hooper's Creek) which flow into the French Broad River at the western edge of the Town. Each stream has numerous small (and often unnamed) tributaries. The National Flood Insurance Program has delineated floodways and flood hazard areas for Cane Creek, Hooper's Creek, Kimsey Creek, Higgins Branch, and the French Broad River. As recommended in the 1993 Land Use Plan, the Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and has adopted a Flood Hazard Ordinance to regulate development in and around designated Flood Hazard Areas and Floodways.

The National Wetlands Inventory, prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, shows several small areas of designated wetlands in the Town. Most are associated with low-lying areas adjoining streams, and lie within designated Flood Hazard Areas.

In 2010, the Town, in cooperation with the North Carolina Land Conservancy, acquired a 12 acre parcel of land on Mills Gap Road which contains 8.6 acres of designated wetlands. This land is under a perpetual deed restriction to preserve the wetlands.

### *Watershed Protection*

Under state law, local governments having land use jurisdiction within a drinking water supply watershed must adopt ordinances to control density of development in the watershed. (Density limits are based on the classification the state designates for each watershed).

As of the effective date of this document, Fletcher is not currently in such a watershed (as was the case at the time of the original 1993 plan). If at any point the Town (or portion of) is again placed under such designation, the Town would need to work with the appropriate state agencies in order to assure that our local ordinances are consistent with any state/federal laws pertaining to the protection of water supply watersheds.

### *Asheville Regional Airport*

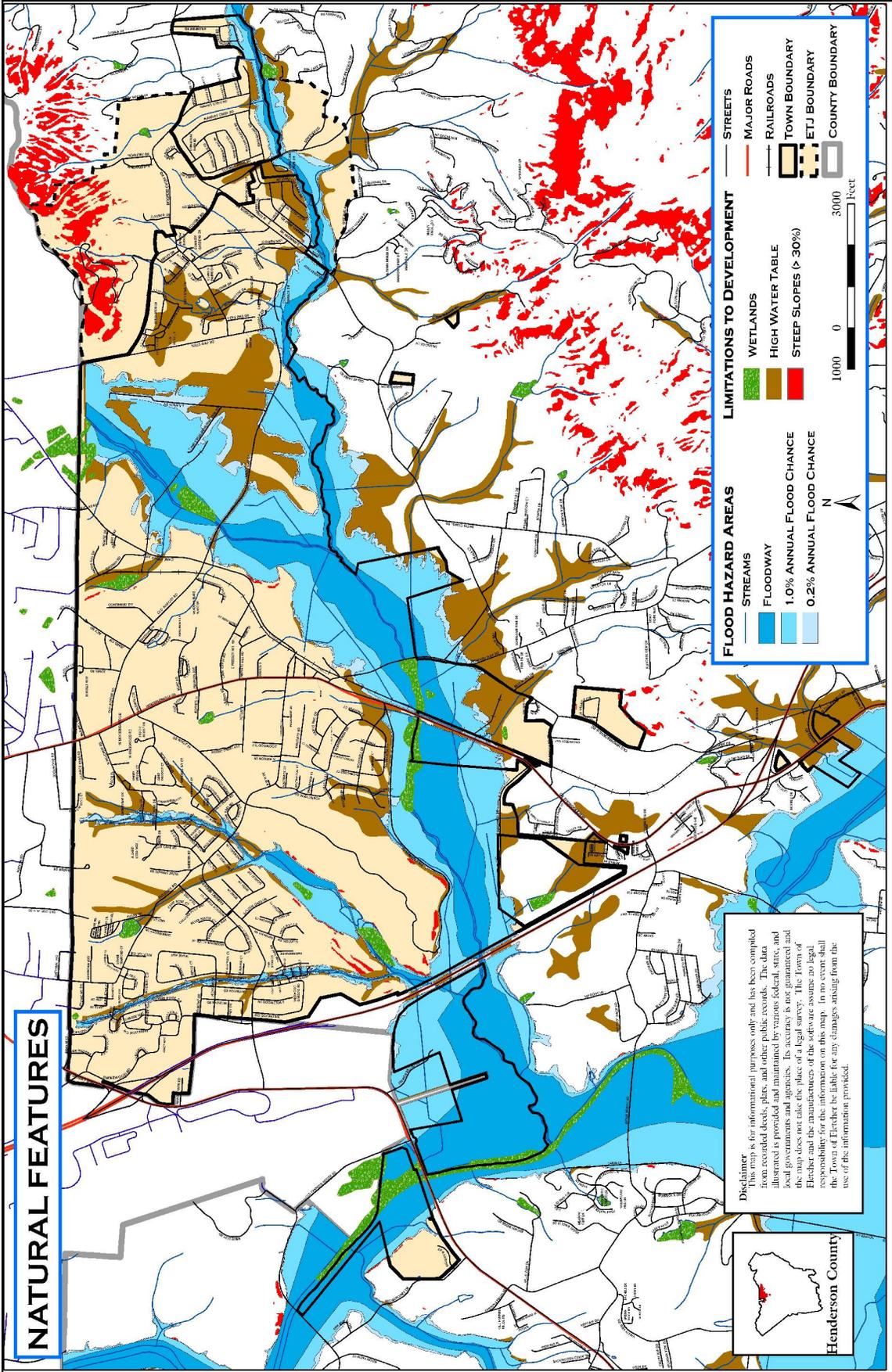
Much of the Town of Fletcher lies within the airspace of the Asheville Regional Airport. Unbeknownst to many, development within the defined airspace would be subject to review and approval of the FAA, mainly as it pertains to height.

The Asheville Regional Airport has been working on an update to its Master Plan, and airport authorities have expressed a desire to work in the future with the various municipal and county governing agencies on ways to coordinate development review for projects proposed in the airspace. This could come simply in the form of more direct communication between the Town

and the Airport Authority, or could potentially involve the adoption of an “Airport Model Height Ordinance” within the Town’s Land Development Code at some point in the future.

Airport authorities stress that adoption of such an ordinance is intended to protect jurisdictions from potential liability in the event a project is permitted that results in airspace encroachment that impacts the safety of aircraft operations. This issue will require further study by the Town and staff will need to work with Council and the Regional Airport authority to learn more about this issue in the near term.

# NATURAL FEATURES



# EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Fletcher has experienced tremendous growth since incorporating in 1989, and since preparation of the 1993 Land Use Plan. When that plan was prepared, many large vacant tracts had yet to be developed, and no annexations had yet taken place. However, it is still useful to examine the changes in the land use pattern.

Table 7  
Land Use

Category	1993		2012	
	Acreage	Percent of Town	Acreage	Percent of Town
Residential - Single family Detached	655.00	21.0 %	1,130.41	27.7 %
Residential - Single family Attached & Multi-Family	4.35	0.14 %	88.22	2.01%
Commercial	140.00	4.43 %	262.64	6.4 %
Public and Institutional	34.64	1.10 %	346.01	8.5 %
Industrial	558.00	17.67 %	650.54	15.9 %
Vacant	1,766.61	55.93 %	1,612.20	39.48 %
TOTAL	3,158.60	100.00 %	4,084.02	100.00 %

## Residential

Not surprisingly, given the large increases already noted in the number of housing units, the amount of land devoted to residential uses has increased the most since 1993. Over 550 acres of land have been developed for residential uses since 1993.

The sixth stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was to encourage residential development between I-26 and US 25, and in the Hooper's Creek area. This was implemented in the first Zoning Ordinance and is carried through to the current Land Development Code. With the exception of the pre-existing quarry and the large vacant areas along the Carriage Road, these areas have been developed for residential uses.

Major single-family detached developments since 1993 include Windsor Forest (1995 - 1998), St. John's Commons (1997 - 1998), Southchase (1993 - 2000), Riverbirch (2000), Livingston Farms (2001 - 2006), and St. John's Woods (2005).

Major single-family attached and multi-family developments since 1993 include Stafford Crossing (2003), Stafford Hills (2005), Townes at Bagwell Mills (2005), Townes at Connor Creek (2007), Brickton Village (2008) and Village at Windstone (2008).

### Commercial

The eighth stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was to provide for adequate expansion of commercial areas in designated commercial hubs, and it designated the northwest corner of Town, along New Airport Road adjoining the I-26 interchange, as such a hub. This was implemented in the initial zoning ordinance and is still in place in the current Land Development Code. Major developments in this area include BMW of Asheville, Apple Tree Honda, Comfort Inn, Hampton Inn, Fairfield Inn, McDonald's, and Ruby Tuesdays.

Commercial growth has also taken place along the US 25 corridor (Ingle's Market, St. John's Marketplace, First Citizens Bank, Mountain First Bank, CVS Pharmacy, etc.). In early 2003, US 25 was widened to its current five-lane configuration, and particular attention has been paid to land use regulations and design standards for the US 25 corridor.

### Parks and Recreation

The second stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was "to provide adequate recreational opportunities for residents".

The first park developed in the Town was Kate's Park, built in 1995. This 1.5 acre park adjoins the Fletcher Library and offers a playground, a tot lot, a shelter and a walking trail.

The centerpiece of the Town's Parks and Recreation system, Fletcher Community Park, was

acquired in two (2) phases - Phase I in 1999 and Phase 2 in 2005. This 60 acre park offers 4 youth baseball/softball fields, 1 adult softball field, soccer fields, a disc golf course, a concession/restroom building, a shelter, a playground, an arboretum and community gardens, and 2.05 miles of walking trails.

Two (2) golf courses have been developed in the Town since 1993: Broadmoor Golf Links (6,921 yards, par 72), completed in 1993, and Southern Tee Golf Course (2,573 yards, par 54) completed in 2001. Both courses are open to the public.

The Town has also developed a Greenway Master Plan, envisioning a 12.65 mile system of walking trails throughout the Town. To date, in addition to the 2.05 miles of trails at Fletcher Community Park, two sections of the system have been completed - a 1.5 mile section of the Cane Creek Trail, and a 0.25 mile section of the Hooper's Creek Trail. In total, over 30% of the system has been completed.

### *Industrial*

The fifth stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was "to provide adequate area for expansion of the industrial base on the east side of town in the area around the existing industrial park" (along Mills Gap Road). This was implemented in the first zoning ordinance and continues in the current Land Development Code.

Industrial uses in the Town are, for the most part, concentrated in this area, along Mills Gap Road, Cane Creek Road and Old Airport Road. Several large industrial parks have been developed in this area since the 1993 Land Use Plan was prepared, with new industrial uses including Bromley Plastics, Tucker Materials, Levi Tool & Mold, and High Gear.

Other industrial uses are located along Rutledge Road (Budweiser of Asheville) and Boylston Highway (Continental Teves).

## Future Considerations

### Residential:

As referenced in previous sections, residential growth has slowed dramatically in the period from 2008-2013. With this slowdown, Fletcher has the opportunity to reexamine its ordinances as they pertain to density and other aspects of residential development.

With the Land Development Code (LDC) in 2006 and the Heart of Fletcher Overlay District in 2011, Fletcher has created more opportunity for higher density in the center of town, where developers will have better ability and capacity for new infrastructure.

As was pointed out during the drafting of the LDC and the HOF-Overlay guidelines, Fletcher currently allows for higher density development in the R-3 zoning district (the Hooper's Creek area), which, with the exception of Livingston Farms (a product of the R-3 district), is still largely a rural and agricultural area. The original 1993 plan (specifically goal #6) called for the encouragement of "low-density, single family residential development to the west of U.S. 25, and *to a limited extent* east of the industrial park." This statement highlights one slight inconsistency with regard to the evolution of the zoning for that area. Thus a small area study, with input from residents of the Hooper's Creek area, could be warranted in order to better determine *today's* desired density for this area.

### Commercial:

Fletcher's primary commercial areas remain US Highway 25 and the Airport Road area. The Town also hopes to see the development of a more traditional downtown on approximately 50 acres of land under Town ownership adjacent to Fletcher Community Park, and in the newly created Heart of Fletcher Overlay District. (See next Section on the Heart of Fletcher).

There is one section of Town currently zoned C-2 Commercial that was developed as high density residential. At some time, Fletcher may wish to consider rezoning this area to a residential district or possibly a mixed use district such as "Neighborhood Business District" (NBD) which would allow for neighborhood scale commercial development that is not as

impactful as development that would potentially occur under C-2 guidelines.

There are other areas in town that could also be examined for the feasibility of an NBD zoning designation, such as Hooper's Creek Road, Underwood Road or Cane Creek Road. Such examination would also be conducted in the form of specific small areas studies where feedback and input from residents in those areas would be sought prior to making any decisions involving changes to ordinances or zoning.

#### *Parks & Recreation:*

Over the last 20 years, Fletcher has become widely regarded as a provider of quality parks and recreation facilities and programs. The park can better be described as a regional park, as it actively serves not only residents of Fletcher but also a significant number of adults and children from Northern Henderson and Southern Buncombe Counties as well. The 2010 Census data indicated that the Town of Fletcher had nearly 1,800 children under the age of 20, which is approximately 25% of the Town's population.

The Town has also gained recognition for its efforts in conservation by placing several areas along our greenways under conservation easements. The Town now also requires usable open space areas in most new residential developments for either passive or active recreation purposes.

As the demand for additional parks and recreation services grows, the Town will need to be mindful of its capacity to maintain its current facilities prior to constructing new ones. Additional capital expenditures would be needed to add new facilities and staff size increased to oversee maintenance. As future increases in additional tax revenues are never certain, Town leaders may need to be creative in order to raise awareness and gain citizen support for additional Parks and Recreation facilities and programming. The formation of a 501(c)3 non-profit organization could be one way to aid in raising of additional capital funds.

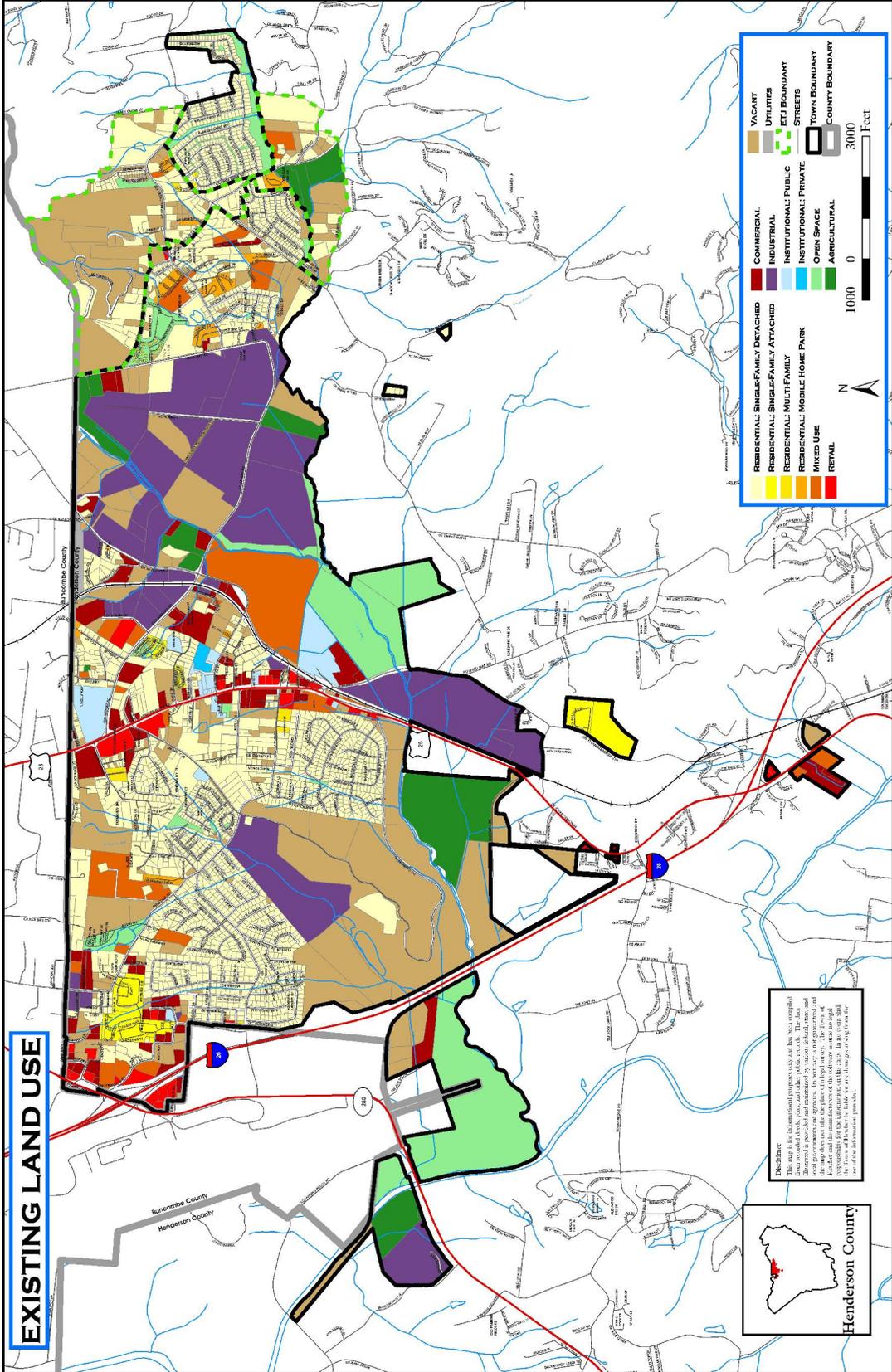
#### *Industrial:*

Despite the economic downturn of 2008, Fletcher's industrial sector has largely flourished. Fletcher Business Park has emerged as a thriving center for various industrial entities where the

former Steelcase plant once operated. And several major industrial entities, such as Blue Ridge Metals, Raflatac, and Continental Teves, have all seen expansions despite current economic trends. Fletcher's current LDC preserves our industrial zoning district, and provides opportunities for growth.

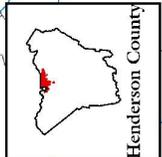
One possible obstacle for future industrial growth is that much of the vacant land in the M-1 zoning district lies in designated floodplain areas, which can severely limit development in some areas, while requiring costly elevation and floodproofing in others. As Fletcher's floodplain regulations stem from federally mandated guidelines, there is little the Town can do to change this.

# EXISTING LAND USE



VACANT	COMMERCIAL	RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED	UTILITIES	INDUSTRIAL	RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	ETJ BOUNDARY
RESIDENTIAL: SINGLE-FAMILY MOBILE HOME PARK	INDUSTRIAL: PUBLIC	RESIDENTIAL: MULTI-FAMILY	STREETS	INDUSTRIAL: PRIVATE	RESIDENTIAL: MOBILE HOME PARK	TOWN BOUNDARY
MIXED USE	OPEN SPACE	RETAIL	AGRICULTURAL	AGRICULTURAL	AGRICULTURAL	COUNTY BOUNDARY

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# THE HEART OF FLETCHER

The seventh stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan is "to encourage the development of a governmental and commercial hub that would give Fletcher an identity point." This concept quickly became known as the "Heart of Fletcher".

In 1997, the Town acquired a 28 acre parcel east of the Norfolk Southern Railway line and designated it as the future "Heart of Fletcher" development. After acquisition; however, it was discovered that the previous owner had polluted the property. This resulted in lengthy legal action to determine responsibility and recover cleanup costs. Approval from various agencies, which took several years to obtain, was required before cleanup could take place.

The delays did not completely stop progress, though. By 1999, the Strategic Plan had identified the Heart of Fletcher as an important way for the Town to develop an "identity" through creation of a "walkable and pleasing to the eye business district ...[with]... opportunities for community building, business development and social interaction."

The next step was the creation of the original Heart of Fletcher Master Plan in 2000. In conjunction with Scott R. Melrose and Associates, the Town held a design charette with citizens and town leaders which produced a conceptual Master Plan for the 28 acre Town-owned parcel and a Pattern Book containing design guidelines for future development.

The Master Plan proposed access to the site from Howard Gap Road, with an "entry feature" at the US 25 intersection. It featured a large "Village Green", surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential development, and a site for a new Town Hall.

The Pattern Book provides photographic and diagrammatic examples of the preferred types of buildings, streets and neighborhoods as well as guidelines for appropriate densities, zoning and organization necessary to facilitate the streetscape attributes for the Heart of Fletcher.



The Pattern Book also set forth twelve (12) goals for the Heart of Fletcher:

1. Create an integrated fabric of public, private and semi-public spaces within a vibrant town center that acts as a hub for existing and probably future development in the Town of Fletcher.
2. Create a new public green as a focal point for the Town to gather, socialize and hold events.
3. Provide commercial, economic, social and physical focus for the Town of Fletcher.
4. Have strong reciprocal relationships between building elements and streetscape elements.
5. Provide a pattern for development that reflects the desires of Fletcher townspeople while allowing for individual creativity in the design fields (architecture, landscape architecture).
6. Include inspiring design details within its spaces (light fixtures, benches, site furniture, paving patterns, signs, etc.).
7. Build with a "pedestrian first, vehicular second" philosophy within the downtown core by providing sidewalks on every street, by delineating crosswalks within the roadway pavements, etc.

8. Relegate parking lots and service-related activities to the rear of buildings thereby dedicating the streetscape corridor to building facades, street trees and the townspeople.
9. Share parking requirements among different land uses.
10. Create a flexible master plan that can expand with future growth and modify based on determined need.
11. Protect the surrounding ecosystem with innovative stormwater and wetlands management.
12. Capture mountain views.

In addition to these goals, the 2000 Master Plan includes a recommendation for "possible access to Fanning Bridge Road and US 25". This became an important part of the overall plan, eventually leading to the extension of Fanning Bridge Road and the acquisition of 17 additional acres to the north of the original 28-acre parcel.

Environmental cleanup occurred in 2006-07. As this work proceeded, the first step in the physical development of the Heart of Fletcher was also completed, the construction of the Fanning Bridge Road extension which linked Fanning Bridge Road to Old Cane Creek Road.

While the original Master Plan and the Pattern Book addressed the 28-acre Town-owned parcel, they did not provide for integration with the existing fabric of the Town, nor did they offer implementation strategies. Therefore, in 2008, the Town retained Walter Robbs Callahan & Pierce (WRCP) to review the 2000 Master Plan, provide updated downtown Fletcher planning strategies, and provide connections between the Town owned parcel (including the 17 acres to the north of the original 28-acre parcel) and the existing Town.

WRCP worked with the Planning Board and Town Council to formulate a much broader Master Plan that would retain the goals of the 2000 Master Plan while looking at the Town-owned parcel in the context of the larger historic center of Town. The stated goals of this Plan are:

1. Link the Town Hall site west to the [US] 25 corridor both visually and physically.
2. Change the corridor so that it is more like a boulevard than a strip mall.

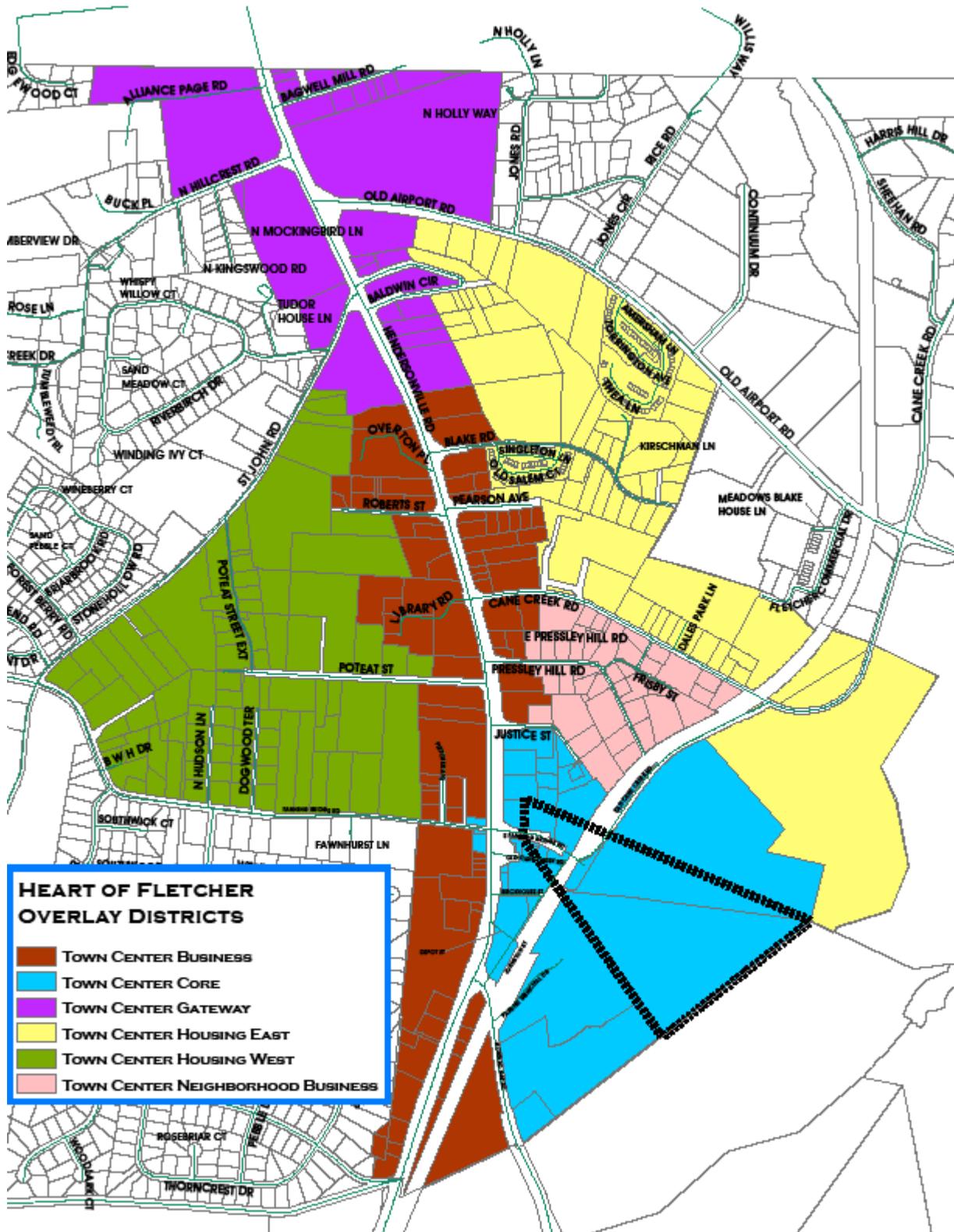
3. Link green space east to the existing park.
4. Create a sense of "Place" following Pattern Book recommendations.
5. 125,000 square feet of commercial development in initial phase 1. Densified development will begin to set the site up as an activity center in Fletcher, beginning the process of its becoming the true "Heart of Fletcher".
6. Establish future Town Hall location. By placing the Town Hall as the focal point of the Heart of Fletcher, the scheme highlights the importance of civic involvement in the development of the Town.
7. Amphitheater and green connection to [Fletcher] Town Park.
8. Leverage academic/institutional partners.
9. Initiate US 25 commercial transition.
10. Higher density infill in historic core.

The WRCP Master Plan emphasizes the location of Town Hall, proposing a location that would provide a grand vista axis view, providing a civic symbol in the Heart of Fletcher around which the Town can unite and develop. Town Hall would be located in a direct line with the Fanning Bridge Road extension and be flanked by two prominent mountain peaks beyond. This fulfilled the first and sixth goals of the WRCP Master Plan as well as the twelfth goal of the 2000 Master Plan ("Capture mountain views").

The Plan provides for mixed-use development and for academic and institutional spaces. Henderson County has committed to constructing a new Fletcher Library, and other partners are being sought.

The WRCP Plan goes beyond the Town-owned property and proposes an overlay district comprised of several different categories and precincts in order to provide developers with a variety of mixed-use opportunities around the Town-owned property. Such zoning increases the viability of a downtown district by promoting denser, interconnected development that supports the Greater Fletcher area.

After a series of Public Input meetings with both the Town Council and the Planning Board, WRCP developed the "Heart of Fletcher Overlay Development Guidelines". These regulations



**HEART OF FLETCHER  
OVERLAY DISTRICTS**

- TOWN CENTER BUSINESS
- TOWN CENTER CORE
- TOWN CENTER GATEWAY
- TOWN CENTER HOUSING EAST
- TOWN CENTER HOUSING WEST
- TOWN CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS

created an overlay district of over 700 acres along the US 25 corridor, made up of six (6) precincts: Town Center Core, Town Center Gateway, Town Center Business, Town Center Neighborhood Business, Town Center Housing - East, and Town Center Housing - West. The Guidelines were adopted by the Town Council on December 12, 2011.

Finally, the Town has taken another important step in the realization of the future Heart of Fletcher with the groundbreaking and construction of the new Town Hall, which commenced in June, 2012.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is the general term given to the basic physical systems of a community, including roads, water and sewer lines, stormwater facilities, etc. After incorporation in 1989, the Town assumed responsibility for most existing infrastructure, and has accepted new infrastructure as developments were completed.

## Streets

The ninth stated goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan was to “*provide a safe and efficient means of transportation to provide ease of movement throughout the town.*”

### **Regional Roadways and Local Street Relationship**

Land use and land development decisions affect the transportation system and changes in the transportation system affect the use of land and development patterns of a local community. The oversight and maintenance of the roadways/streets in the Town of Fletcher are shared among three distinct groups: private groups/individuals; NCDOT and the Town.

The streets and roadways within the Town fall under control of the State of North Carolina; (NCDOT -16.28 linear miles); local private roadways (13.44 linear miles) and the Town of Fletcher (23.05 linear miles) as of 2012.

The Town regulates the building of local streets, sidewalks, driveways, parking spaces, streetscapes, curbing, etc. in new developments, whether or not they are private or public roadways, under Articles 8, 9 and 12 of the Fletcher Land Development Code.

### **NCDOT- Major Corridors and Feeders**

Starting in 2003, Fletcher’s commercial corridor, US 25 was expanded to five lanes; Old Airport Road was upgraded to handle large trucks; Fanning Bridge Road was extended to the Heart of Fletcher and pedestrian upgrades were completed along St John’s Road in 2011. These projects made the locations along the roadways more desirable for higher intensity development and safer

for pedestrians.

The widening along the US 25 corridor by NCDOT included the construction of new sidewalks, street crosswalks, railroad crossing and traffic signals for pedestrian safety along part of the north-south corridor.

NCDOT maintains 16.28 linear miles of roadways in the Town and is responsible for the major collector streets including Cane Creek Road, Mills Gap Road, Old Airport Road, Fanning Bridge Road, Howard Gap Road, Rutledge Road, Hooper's Creek Road, St John Road and US 25.

The Town is served by I-26, which runs along the western border. Two (2) exits provide access – one at Airport Road in the northwestern corner, and one at US 25 at the southern border adjoining several satellite annexations. Both areas are adjacent to growing commercial enterprises just outside the town's jurisdiction.

### **Local Streets: Town of Fletcher and Private Parties**

A number of streets within the Town's boundaries are private, and the adjoining landowners are responsible for maintenance, repairs, and snow removal. These streets total 13.44 linear miles.

The Town accepted many of the local streets that were in place at the time of incorporation, and for those constructed since incorporation. The Town provides a full range of services for 23.05 miles of roadways including routine maintenance, repairs, snow removal, street lighting, etc.)

### **Water Service**

The vast majority of homes and businesses in the Town are served by the City of Hendersonville's water distribution system. There is a small area in the northwest corner of the Town (the Franham Acres subdivision and the Underwood Road area) that is served by the Asheville - Buncombe Water Authority.

## *Sewer Service*

The Town is served by the Henderson County owned and operated Cane Creek Sewer District (CCWSD), which is part of a larger regional wastewater system with treatment and disposal of wastewater provided by the Metropolitan Sewerage District (MSD) of Buncombe County. The CCWSD buys wastewater treatment capacity from MSD to have its wastewater sent to MSD's treatment plant through a gravity interceptor line that runs through the northern part of Henderson County. Henderson County sets the rates for collection of its wastewater, while MSD sets rates for wastewater treatment.

There are also residential septic systems and a small number of manufacturers operate their own wastewater treatment facilities in the Town.

## *Stormwater & Water Quality*

In 1990, under the authority of the Clean Water Act, the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) promulgated regulations to reduce pollutant discharges from stormwater runoff. Phase I of the program required large municipalities (those with a population over 100,000) to adopt policies and practices necessary to obtain a permit under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). In 2005, the program was expanded ("Phase II") to include smaller municipalities such as Fletcher.

In 2007, the Town prepared a Stormwater Master Plan to address stormwater related items, including:

1. Creating a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II compliant Stormwater Ordinance - This Ordinance was adopted by the Town Council in July, 2007;
2. NPDES compliant stormwater outfall inventory and illicit discharge (pollutant) detection - This identified 230 outfall points, 59 pipes/culverts, and 6 bridges;
3. Town of Fletcher culvert capacity analysis - The Plan recommended replacement of 16 culverts throughout the Town and prioritized them in order of importance; and

4. On-going Stormwater Conveyance System maintenance - The Plan included a series of recommendations regarding general stormwater practices, and included an analysis of potential funding sources for the recommended improvements and on-going maintenance.

The Town's Land Development Code currently includes regulations that cover post construction runoff control and prohibition of illicit discharges/pollutants into stormwater conveyances. The ordinance also addresses requirements for conventional stormwater requirements that begin at 20,000 square feet of impervious surface area. Stormwater systems that address the water quality component must be provided in developments where one or more acres of land is being disturbed. Henderson County is currently the delegated agency which oversees review and compliance with these regulations (as well as soil and erosion control).

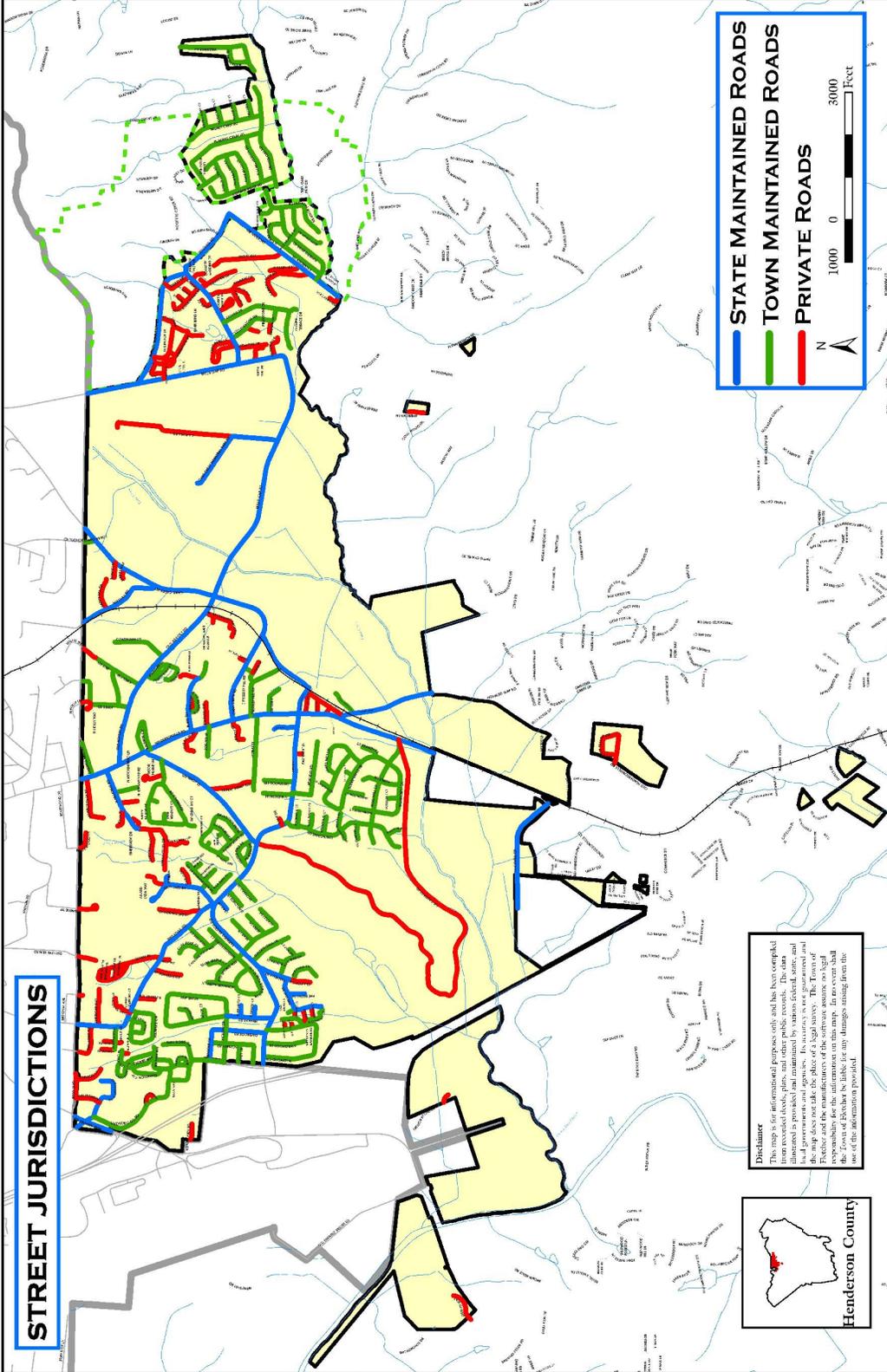
### *Future Considerations*

Fletcher has successfully established a system which prioritizes maintenance of its 23.05 miles of Town maintained roads. Each year, the Public Works Department works with the Town's consulting engineer to identify the roads in most critical need of maintenance and repairs, and a certain amount of capital is expended to conduct this work (largely drawn from Powell Bill funding).

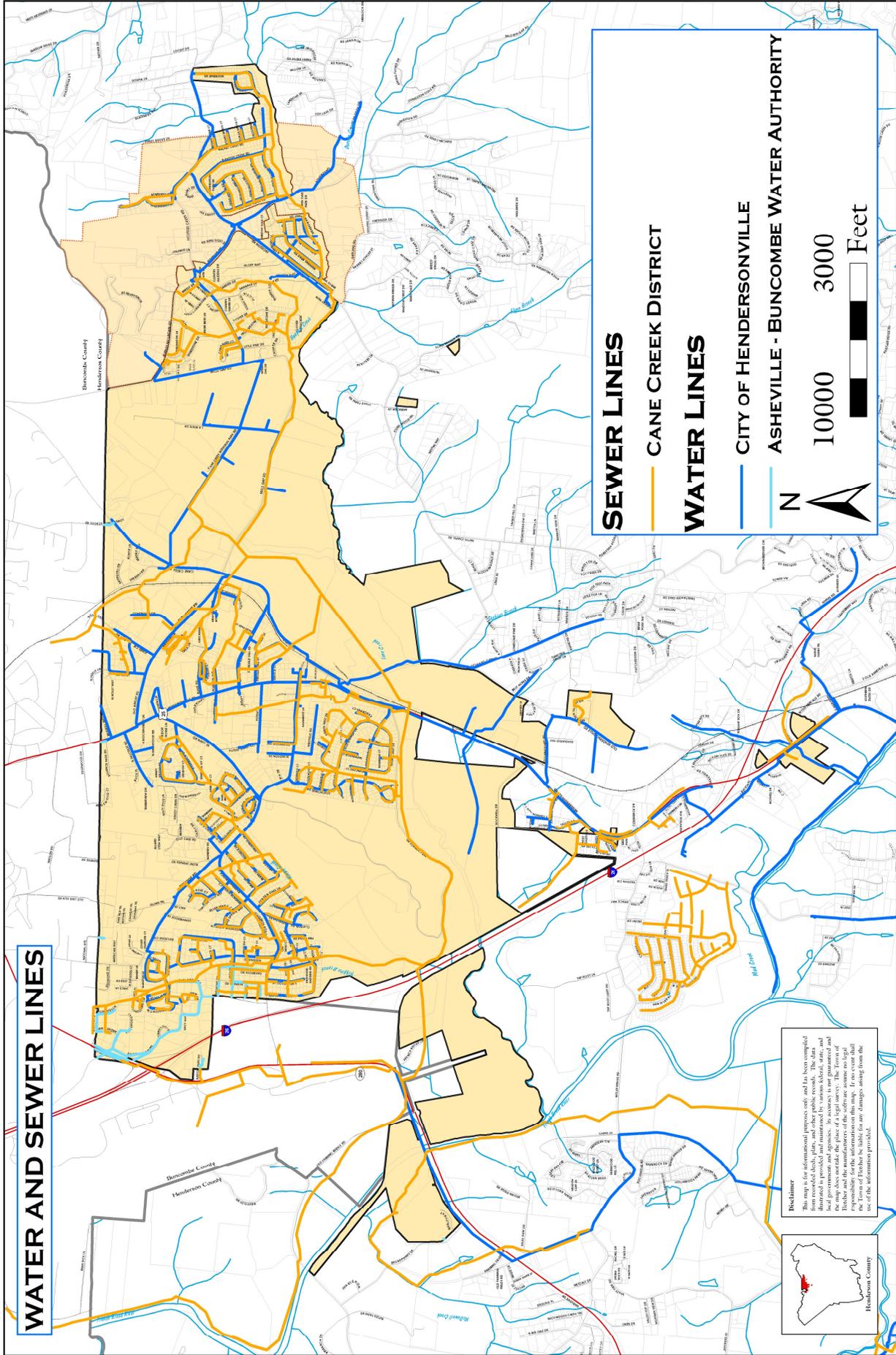
However, when Fletcher incorporated, in addition to its road network, it inherited a system of stormwater infrastructure that today is showing signs of aging and decay. Additionally, as new development has occurred, there are now additional roads and subdivisions with additional stormwater infrastructure, as well as curbing and sidewalks, all falling within town rights of way.

In the coming years, the Town will need to work with its consulting engineer on a similar plan to prioritize repairs and maintenance of this type of infrastructure. As infrastructure continues to age, additional capital expenditures will become a part of the annual budget preparations and planning.

With regard to water and sewer services, despite the fact that the Town does not directly oversee provision of these services, Fletcher will need to continue to work with the appropriate utility providers to identify gaps in service and to determine feasibility of contributing toward projects designed to fill these gaps in order to better serve its residents.



# WATER AND SEWER LINES



# TOWN SERVICES

Since the original 1993 plan the Town has made great strides in establishing various departments that provide services to its residents, including the following:

- **Administration** – The Town Manager handles day to day operations within the Town of Fletcher and is the primary liaison to the Mayor and Town Council. This department also includes support staff that oversees finance, human resources, tax collection, business licensing, and other general administrative assistance
- **Police** – Prior to establishment of this department, the Town contracted with Henderson County Sheriff’s Dept. Today, the Fletcher Police Dept. has 16 employees.
- **Public Works** – A staff of 8 currently provides such services as garbage collection, brush and leaf pick-up, snow removal, street sweeping, and other maintenance work.
- **Parks & Recreation** – A staff of 4 oversees the operation and maintenance of Fletcher Community Park, Kate’s Park and provides numerous recreational, athletic, and holiday programs.
- **Planning & Zoning** – A staff of two currently works to assure compliance with various land use regulations and is the liaison to both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The Town also contracts with Fletcher Fire & Rescue for fire protection services and with the Henderson County Fire Marshal’s office for commercial fire inspections.

## *Future Considerations*

While the Town does not currently plan to add other departments in the foreseeable future, there will be continued requests and pressure for additional services in the years to come. During the course of conducting general Town business, we frequently receive feedback or requests or questions on why a particular service is not offered by the Town. Also, as previously referenced, the Town conducted an online survey which highlighted several recurring themes with regard to future services the Town may be called upon to consider. A summary of some of the recurring themes we periodically receive input on follows:

- **Expansion of greenway system/Additional Sidewalks**
- **Property upkeep & Maintenance/Nuisance issues**
- **Additional recreation/athletic programs/facilities**
- **Stormwater issues**
- **Historic preservation**

# CONCLUSION

Since incorporation, and especially since preparation and adoption of the 1993 Land Use Plan, the Town of Fletcher has diligently pursued the primary goal of the 1993 Land Use Plan; namely:

1. To provide the citizens of Fletcher with a quality environment for living, leisure activities and work.

As noted in the Introduction, we have enumerated the various ordinances and policies that have been implemented in order to fulfill the original goals of the 1993 Land Use Plan (*with a minor revision to #6, concerning residential density*).

2. To provide adequate recreational opportunities for residents - fulfilled thru development of two (2) parks and numerous recreation programs;
3. To prevent inappropriate development of identified flood hazard areas or other environmentally sensitive areas that might endanger lives, property or health - fulfilled through adoption and enforcement of the Land Development Code, especially the Steep Slopes and Flood Hazard Ordinances;
4. To discourage the development of incompatible land uses - fulfilled through adoption and enforcement of the Land Development Code;
5. To provide adequate area for expansion of the industrial base on the east side of town in the area around the existing industrial park - fulfilled through adoption and enforcement of the Land Development Code;
6. To encourage low-density, single-family residential development west of US 25, and to a limited extent east of the industrial park, and to encourage higher density residential development in the central part of Town - fulfilled through adoption and enforcement of the Land Development Code, and the HOF Overlay guidelines;
7. To encourage the development of a governmental and commercial hub that would give Fletcher an identity point - fulfilled through adoption of the Heart of Fletcher Master Plan, Overlay District, and construction of a new Town Hall;
8. To provide for adequate expansion of commercial areas in designated commercial

hubs rather than in continuous strips along major thoroughfares - fulfilled through adoption and enforcement of the Land Development Code;

9. To develop a safe and efficient means of transportation that will provide ease of movement throughout the town - fulfilled through continued maintenance and expansion of the street system.

The 1993 Land Use Plan concluded with an Implementation Strategy, recommending six (6) ordinances and policies. It is appropriate to review those as well:

Zoning Ordinance - as noted earlier, the Town adopted the first zoning ordinance in 1995, and has periodically updated it as necessary.

Subdivision Ordinance - adopted in 1995 as part of the Zoning Ordinance and now included in the Land Development Code.

Watershed Ordinances - as noted above, Fletcher is no loner within a designated drinking water supply watershed and thus is not required to adopt such ordinances at this time.

Thoroughfare Plan - The Town worked closely with the NCDOT to prepare the plans for improving US 25.

Staff Support - The Town employs a professional planning director nd provides funding for continuing education and training.

Coordination - The Town Council is regularly updated on land use issues and periodically holds joint meetings with the Planning Board.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Town conducted a survey that included several questions pertaining to various land use issues and town services. (See Appendix 2 for full survey results). Some of the feedback received confirmed several notions regarding land use and desired services

that has been discussed on numerous occasions through the years that have shaped the Town's land use regulations and zoning. This feedback largely related to the following themes:

- *Limited availability of rental housing (ranging from affordable to upscale and also specific to seniors).*
- *The desire for more retail and professional services within Town limits (as the survey showed that the majority of residents must leave Town limits for most services and activities)*
- *The desire for more and more recreational activities ranging from sidewalks and greenways to athletic programs and other recreational amenities.*

The Town's land use regulations and zoning provide for ample opportunities for the establishment of such desired uses. However, as so much is market driven, the Town will have to continue to work with developers and property owners on the gradual development and *redevelopment* of property on such uses as market conditions allow. Additional recreational amenities provided by the Town will be determined by future budgetary considerations.

It is the Town of Fletcher's intent to guide future land use and development in a responsible manner supportive of the previously stated goals. Planning Staff and the Planning Board will continue to develop ordinance amendments to the Land Development Code (LDC) as necessary. Future rezoning requests should be studied closely and decisions should be based on whether a proposed rezoning would result in compatible infill development or would eliminate opportunities for *incompatible* development that is inconsistent with the Town's initial goals. Applications for Special Use Permits and Conditional Districts (or Conditional Use Rezoning) should also be carefully considered to make sure they are consistent with guidelines set forth in the LDC and that approval of such uses will not be inconsistent with stated goals. The Town will also revisit this plan as needed in the future (prior to the end of the stated 20 year planning period) in order to address any new emerging land use issues that arise.