

### Focused Growth Corridors and Nodes:

Future growth within the study area should be directed to areas with existing infrastructure capacity or locations where infrastructure extensions or improvements can be made most logically and economically. These locations include:

- Vance Road Corridor Extension
- Long Creek Community (as specified by the Beatties Ford / Mt. Holly-Huntersville Small Area Plan)
- NC 73 Corridor

**Open Space Preservation:** The character of the built environment and its relationship to the natural landscape forms the image and identity of Huntersville. The Town is at a critical juncture regarding the need to develop a Comprehensive Open Space and Protection Strategy. Growth within the study area is occurring at rapid levels. As land development continues to encroach on previously undeveloped land areas within the Beatties Ford Corridor Study Area, the supply of existing open space is reduced. This condition increases the need to preserve open space, while at the same time making open space protection more expensive due to rising land values resulting from this increased demand for land development.

Six of Mecklenburg County's fourteen nature preserves are located within the study area. Yet there is no strategic guidance for open space conservation on a regional level. The Open Space Framework and Implementation section of this report provides specific recommendations and approaches to this issue.

**Mixed and Multiple Uses:** A mixture of land uses, housing, jobs and incomes creates a more balanced community, reduces traffic and creates a better fiscal balance. Use of a village land use classification pattern that reduces reliance on the automobile by allowing a variety of land uses is also a valuable tool in promoting this type of community. The building blocks of a village are neighborhoods which incorporate housing, shops, employment, schools, parks and civic facilities essential

to the daily life of residents.

New mixed-use retail and office centers should be located at the north (NC 73) and south (Mt. Holly - Huntersville Road) ends of the corridor in "hamlet" centers. A hamlet can be defined as a discernible place with a focal point and boundary that maintains and fosters primarily residential, institutional (i.e. places of worship, schools) or recreational activities. 50% or more of its land is dedicated to open space (either a preserve or reserve). It is organized in accordance with a pedestrian scale. Its boundary is typically an agricultural or natural area.

There are a number of uses that are compatible within the neighborhood core as permitted in the Town's Neighborhood Residential (NR) District zoning classification. To enhance these neighborhoods, a percentage of retail in the neighborhood core should be prescribed within the zoning code. Design elements and standards should also be established to ensure retail viability of the core.

Design elements should include:

- Architectural detailing of storefronts
  - Main street shops
  - On street parking
- Building heights two- four stories
- Streetscapes with human and architectural interest
- Mixed use: residential or office over retail
- Site planning for new commercial and mixed-use development is to employ a village-grid development pattern that can easily be adapted or transition between residential, open space, mixed-use and civic uses over time.
- Public/civic open space with green linkages to adjacent neighborhood and parks



*Above: Sketch of the Holly Bend Plantation on Neck Road, on the National Register of Historic Places.*

### 6.3.2 Architectural Framework for Community Design

Design standards for commercial development are to reference the rural and historical features of the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. New commercial and civic structures are recommended to be composed of brick and employ Neoclassical/Palladian details in the style reminiscent of Federalist civic architecture, such as that of the historic churches in the area. Regional precedents of Federalist civic buildings (or older Georgian Colonial precedents) are to be found throughout Virginia and the Carolinas, and it is worth mentioning those structures that have been preserved in downtown Alexandria, Virginia, Old Salem in Winston-Salem, and Edenton, N.C. (a fine example is St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Edenton, the oldest brick church in use in North Carolina). The buildings defining the

William J. Bowman Square in Vermillion are contemporary examples in Huntersville that incorporate references to Federalist architecture. The Hopewell Presbyterian Church will serve as the precedent for Federalist period architecture in the study area. Like many of the historic, rural homes in the area, this architecture emphasizes the human scale and exhibits stately restraint in building massing and in the handling of architectural elements and ornamental details.

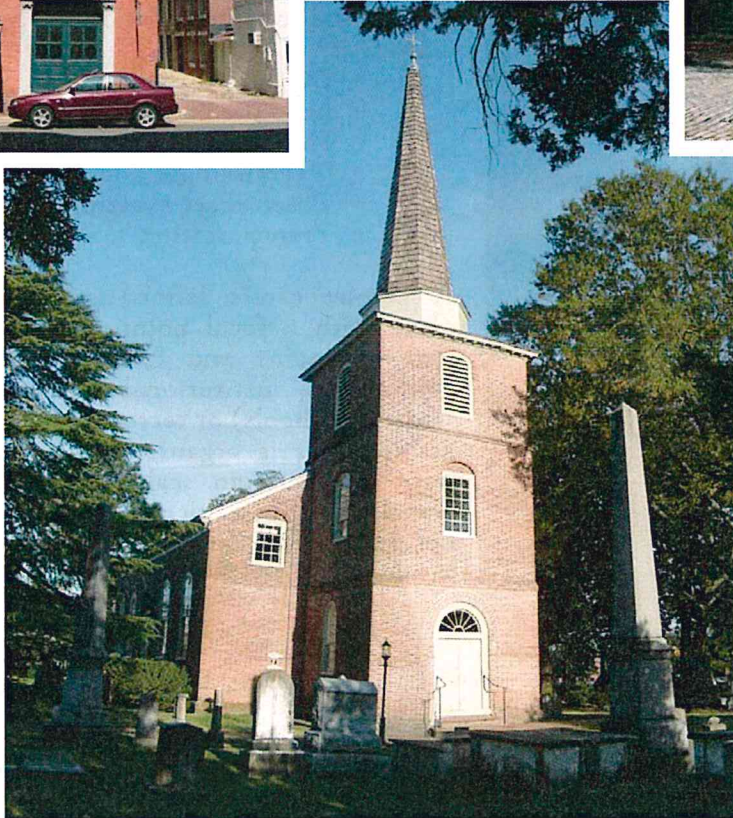
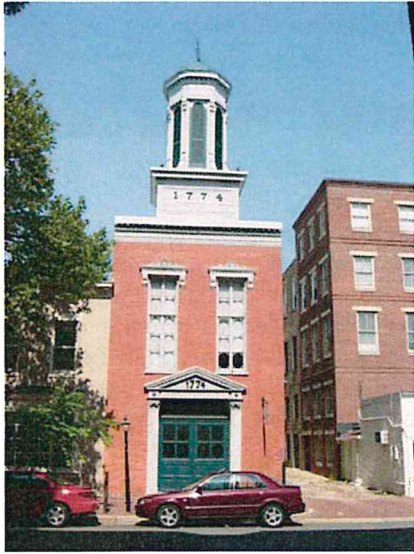
In order to honor the historic heritage of the Corridor, building elements shall employ the following features and physical guidelines:

- Signage, lighting, and awnings are to be integrated into frieze band above the first story
- Primary building materials are to be masonry, wood, and/or fiber cement board
- Building elements such as frieze, cornice, and columns are to have architecturally correct proportions
- Wood frame windows & mullions
- Significant buildings are to be emphasized by unique architectural features such as towers, clerestory windows, pyramid roofs, and deep overhangs
- Tower elements, either freestanding

### SUGGESTED ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALS

Material used for future enhancements of BFR Corridor should reflect the rich historical heritage of the region. Natural materials such as brick, stone, and wood should be used as they reflect a continuity with the historical framework of the area.





*Above and left: Examples of civic structures and treatments. Above left to right: a firehouse in Alexandria, Virginia; intersection monument, Alexandria, Virginia; Freemason Street in Norfolk, Virginia.*

*Left: The oldest brick church in use in North Carolina - the St. Paul Episcopal Church in Edenton, N.C., exhibiting the character of late Georgian architecture.*

*Below: The Historic Hopewell Presbyterian Church.*

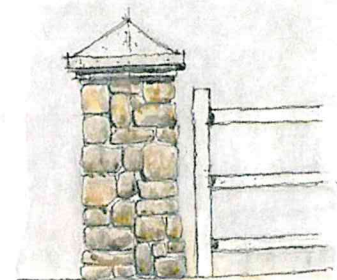


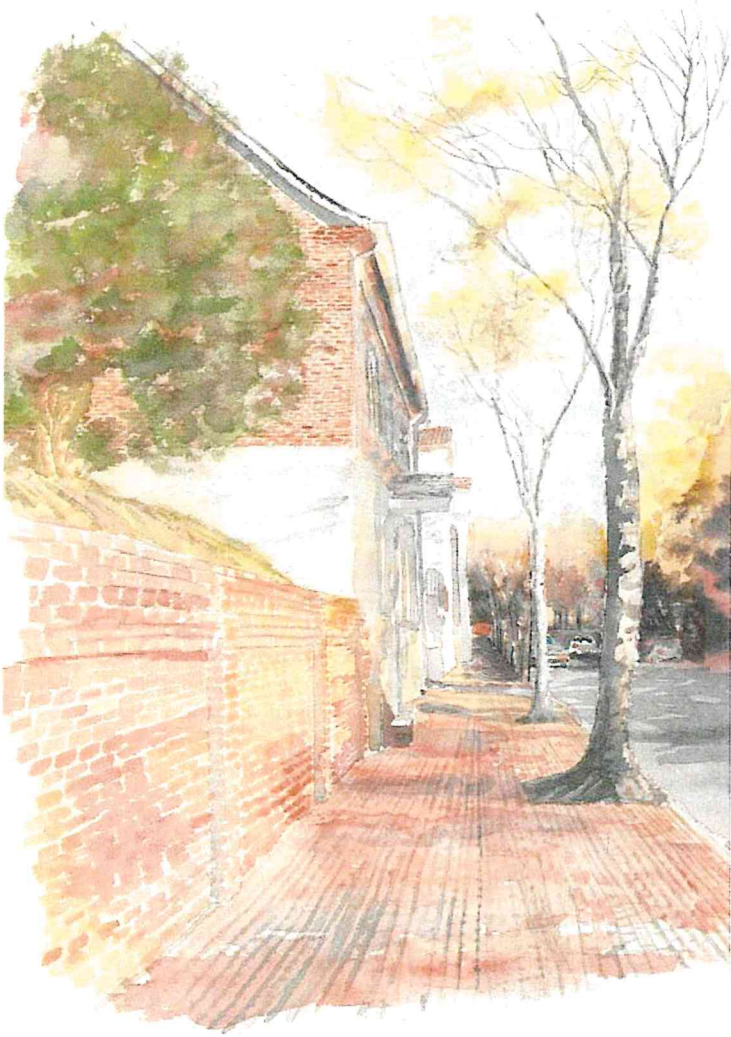
or part of a larger building, are located to terminate street vistas, emphasize significant street intersections, and highlight major open spaces

- Masonry details, such as rowlock sills, reveals, stretcher coursing, and corbels, are used to highlighting major building elements
- Traditional storefronts with wood mullions, solid or glass transom, and wood or masonry base
- Entrances are to be defined by features such as awnings, overhangs, lintels,

pediments, porches, and recessed facades

- Wide (10'+) sidewalks with textured bands and joint spacing to relate to the building's column/bay spacing
- Split rail wood fencing with stone columns to reflect local historic features (example of a gateway pillar illustrated at right)





## 6.4 Mixed Use / Hamlet Centers

At the May 10<sup>th</sup> open house, public consensus favored the adoption of a mixed-use/hamlet center development concept for those areas designated as appropriate locations for commercial uses. A mixed-use/hamlet center development pattern would require that the following issues be addressed:

- Density/scale
- Land use pattern
- Functional relationships
- Overall image and identity
- Green space system
- Transportation

A "hamlet" can be defined as a discernible place with a focal point and boundary that maintains and fosters residential, commercial, institutional (i.e. places of worship, schools) or recreational uses and activities. It is organized in accordance with a pedestrian scale to permit and encourage non-vehicular transportation options (i.e. walking and biking).



*Old Salem in Winston-Salem (left) is an example of a district demonstrating the character of a potential Hamlet Center. The streetscape for the Long Creek Hamlet Center (above) draws from the character of Old Salem and honors the brick vernacular architecture of the BFRCSAP Corridor. At right is a detail of the base rustication of the Cedar Grove Plantation House.*



*Below are structures that represent the rural heritage of the BFRCSAP corridor; pictured left to right are: a cabin in the Long Creek Community, the Historic Torrance Store, the well of the McCoy-Nisbit House.*



### 6.4.1 Beatties Ford Road/Highway 73 Development

A mixed use commercial center containing retail, multi-family residential, and civic uses is proposed at the northern end of the study area where Beatties Ford Road, Vance Road and NC 73 intersect. The location and composition of this center will be subject to final determination of the road network recommended by this plan by MUMPO and the Town.

### 6.4.2 Latta Village:

On January 16, 2007, the Town Board approved a commercial center with approximately 100,000 square feet on 23 acres. The approved plan is anchored by a 55,600 square feet grocery store. An internal grid pattern has been established with the introduction of public streets that provides connections to the Hopewell High School property and Hambright Road .

### 6.4.3 Long Creek Community:

In 2005, The Town of Huntersville retained the services of Gemini Studios, Warren Associates and the Littlejohn Group to prepare a market based vision for the intersection of Mt. Holly-Huntersville and Beatties Ford Road. The focus of the plan was to create a new "urban village" centered on the Long Creek Elementary School. The plan identified a number of initiatives that are relevant to The Beatties Ford Road Corridor Small Area Plan, including:

- Focusing retail development on Mt. Holly- Huntersville Road (25,000 - 50,000 square feet demand by the year 2015)
- Making the Long Creek Elementary School the focal point of the future Long Creek hamlet center
- Increasing residential development
- Developing a roundabout at McCoy and Beatties Ford Road

The Long Creek Elementary School reconstruction provides significant opportunity for redevelopment of the Long Creek area. Residential uses will be single-family, with a future potential for some attached housing in response to changes in the market. The following sketches and plans support the recommended initiatives of the Mt. Holly-Huntersville/Beatties Ford Road Small Area Plan for residential and commercial uses.



*Above and right: sketch concepts for the Long Creek Hamlet Center. The architecture and rural motifs of the BFR Corridor are referenced.*





## 6.5 Open Space and Preservation

During the public participation process for the BFRCSAP, preservation of the historic, rural heritage of the Corridor was a primary concern raised by stakeholders and the public. Continuing preservation of the natural lands and farms of the Corridor will not only preserve the qualities that make the Corridor distinct, protecting the quality of life for the Town of Huntersville, but also serve the greater region through recreation, education, and the continued conservation of the region's air and water quality, local wildlife and ecological diversity. Conservation planning presents physical solutions and policies for smart growth that should not be misconstrued as "anti-growth". Conservation strategies are necessary mechanisms of responsible civic management and planning to sustain the economy, resources, public health and future growth of the region. To help gather public support and resources to implement a conservation vision, this plan proposes an open space framework for the BFR Corridor with two primary aims: (1) to designate specific areas for preservation and (2) to build a cohesive open space network, presenting a conceptual framework for integrating these pristine areas with the community. The following framework will highlight and strengthen community assets that the Town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg County and their citizens can support and protect for generations.

### 6.5.1 Open Space Preservation

The primary goal of this plan is to create a preservation vision for the BFR Corridor. Preservation of the area's historic and rural lands is not only important for preserving the character and quality of life of the Corridor, it is necessary for the preservation of regional assets, namely, the distinct natural communities that still exist in these lands and the critical watersheds, aquatic and riparian habitats that convey and filter water to the inlet of the drinking water supply system for the Town of Huntersville and other communities served by Mountain Island Lake.

Six of the fourteen nature preserves in Mecklenburg County are located within the study area. A number of natural heritage sites are located both inside and outside the County owned nature preserves. Added to these protected areas is a Duke Energy facility just south of NC 73 and adjacent to the Catawba River, which provides conservation areas that function as a waterfowl refuge along the river. These nature preserves form an almost unbroken string of preservation lands along the Catawba River, creating a dominant green border of natural open space to permanently encompass most of the meandering western edge of the study area. With the exception of a few subdivisions, farm house clusters and the CMUD Waste Water Treatment Plant,