

Principles of Growth for the Town of Franklin

Preamble

What can we do now to ensure that in 20 years Franklin will still be recognized as a great place to live? This question is critical as we grapple with the formidable challenge of managing growth. In North Carolina in the past 30 years, population has increased 50 percent while vehicle miles traveled have increased 300 percent. Historically, we have handled growth in ways that have resulted in all of us living farther and farther from our destinations, be they work, school, worship, play or shopping. These extra miles have far-reaching consequences: more congestion and air pollution resulting from our increased dependence on automobiles; the loss of precious open space; the need for costly improvements to roads and public services; the inequitable distribution of economic resources; and the loss of a sense of community.

We believe that in order to help maintain what we love about Franklin, and still accommodate growth, we have to change our planning approach to create safe and friendly streets for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists and to encourage attractive and affordable housing choices closer to our daily destinations. We believe our land use policies should recognize Franklin's architectural heritage, replicate its best-loved patterns of building, encourage building approaches that create legacies instead of tear-downs or franchise styles and, thus, preserve and enhance the special sense of place that is Franklin, North Carolina.

In our region, where the economy is driven by tourism, second home ownership, and retiree migration, it is clear that sense of place is an asset as surely as a navigable waterway or a mountain of buried coal was an asset in previous eras. Destinations that attract investment are those that distinguish themselves from competitors by virtue of their natural and man-made environments. Such communities are not sought out because they have the biggest retail boxes or the most chain restaurants. They are valued because they have deliberately preserved their traditional character and protected their sense of place.

The principles contained in this document are intended to guide the Town's future land use decisions. We recognize that many of the principles are dependent upon fiscal capacity and support, as well as a commitment from the community and elected officials. With that foundation of community commitment and support in place, we are confident these principles will foster the continued vitality that has made Franklin a great town and an original place.