



## Proposed Comprehensive Plan - Report to City Council

Meeting Date: November 8, 2010

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**Request:** Consider Planning Commission recommendation to adopt **Vision 2020: The Comprehensive Plan for Rock Hill and Vision 2020 Land Use Map**

**Staff Contact:** Christine M. Fisher, AICP, Senior Long Range Planner

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### OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Plan is an important policy guide that sets the long term vision for our community. It includes an evaluation of the trends and existing conditions, defines community needs, and establishes an action plan to ensure orderly growth, effective management of resources, and provision of services.

State law requires that municipalities review their comprehensive plans at least every five years and update them every ten years. As such, Rock Hill must prepare and adopt a new Comprehensive Plan by December 2010. At a minimum, the Plan must consist of the following nine elements: Population, Community Facilities, Transportation, Housing, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Economic Conditions, Land Use, and Priority Investment.

Over the last two years, staff has worked closely with the community to develop one of the City's most important plans for the future. The proposed **Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan** provides the vision and policy framework to guide decisions that will affect Rock Hill for the next ten years and beyond. City officials will refer to it for every major policy, funding, and development decision and its implication on long-term goals. Furthermore, development and rezoning applications will be evaluated for consistency with the vision and character area principles described in the **Vision 2020 Land Use Plan**.

The recommendations within the nine Plan Elements include 51 Goals, 113 Objectives, and 452 Implementation Strategies. Collectively, these recommendations are summarized by three Core Community Values and seven Priority Policy Directions.

#### Community Values

1. Grow Inside First
2. Well-Designed, Sustainable Neighborhoods
3. Better Connections

#### 2020 Priority Policy Directions

1. Focus on Redevelopment and Infill
  2. Achieve Sustainability
  3. Plan for Dave Lyle Corridor East
  4. Enhance Mobility and Connectivity
  5. Promote Redevelopment and Infill Development Along Key Corridors
  6. Create Livable Places
  7. Leverage Resources through Partnerships and Coordination
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## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **Public Outreach**

Public participation was key throughout the planning process. The following community meetings were held to gather input and feedback during various stages of the Plan's development:

- March 19, 2009 Community Kick-Off: an overview of the Comprehensive Plan update process
- March 31; April 2, 6, & 9, 2009 Open House Sessions: to discuss key issues and the future vision for the City at local community centers
- June 11, 2009 Open House Session: an opportunity for review and comments on the draft existing conditions, needs, and goals and objectives for the Housing, Natural Resources, and Cultural Resources Elements
- November 2-4, 2009 Community Choices Studio: 3-day event focused on identifying land use and economic issues affecting the future growth of Rock Hill
- March 10, 2010 Open House Session: an opportunity for review and comments on the draft existing conditions, needs, and goals and objectives for the Transportation, Population, and Community Facilities Elements
- April 14, 2010 Open House Session: an opportunity for review and comments on the draft existing conditions, needs, and goals and objectives for the Economic Conditions, Land Use, and Priority Investment Elements and the land use map
- July 13, 2010 Open House Session: presentation on the Core Values and Priority Policy Directions of the draft Plan with opportunity for review and comments on the draft documents, including the draft Comprehensive Plan and maps

In addition to public meetings, staff used a variety of outreach tools to solicit community input. A visioning questionnaire, youth survey, workshop exercises, as well as a dedicated website ([www.RockHill2020.com](http://www.RockHill2020.com)) and e-mail address ([RockHill2020@cityofrockhill.com](mailto:RockHill2020@cityofrockhill.com)). These tools allowed citizens to keep up-to-date on upcoming events, provide valuable input, review draft documents, and contact staff with any questions they may have regarding the Plan update process.

A 25-member steering committee comprised of community leaders and stakeholders was appointed by City Council in early 2009 to oversee the 2020 Comprehensive Plan update process. Members served as "Ambassadors" of the community and provided guidance on ideas and recommendations that evolved through the planning process.

Several Focus Groups were assembled to work on specific plan elements through the update process by assisting staff with their technical experience and practical knowledge of the subject matter. Facilitated by staff, these 10-15 member work-groups provided input on existing conditions, helped prepare needs assessments, assisted with recommendations and reported their findings to the Steering Committee.

### **Public Feedback**

More than 350 participants attended the various public meetings that were held throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process. On June 26, 2010, the Public Review Draft of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan was made available for public inspection. It was also available for review at the July 13, 2010 Open House. In general, respondents were very supportive proposed vision, priorities, and recommendations within the draft Plan and future land use map. They also commended the overall input process and level of public participation opportunities offered.

## RECENT CHANGES

On August 12, 2010, a joint Planning Commission/City Council workshop was held to present the draft Comprehensive Plan as well as share the public feedback received during the update process, key findings and major themes, and next steps in the adoption process. Staff was requested to make additional clarifications, particularly within the Planning Summary section of the draft Plan and on the land use map. A summary of the concerns and staff responses follow:

- **Comment:** Emphasize sustainability and put greater focus on emerging technological advances in resource conservation and energy efficiency.

**Response:** A sentence was added to the “Focus on Sustainability” subheading on page 8 of the Public Hearing Draft stressing the importance of considering the use of new technologies to promote energy efficiency and conservation when implementing the Plan. Also, “Achieve Sustainability” is one of the seven recommended 2020 Priority Policy Directions in the Plan Summary and is a recurring theme throughout the Plan and its recommendations.

- **Comment:** Clarify on the land use map why only two Employment Centers are shown and not other existing and planned employment centers, such as business parks and Riverwalk.

**Response:** The Employment Centers represent two existing industrial/business parks that are an exception to the character area that they are within, the Suburban Character Area. Other employment centers are located within the Industrial Corridor Character Area, which supports and promotes industrial uses.

- **Comment:** Clarify the intent of the Edge Management subarea and emphasize the need for intergovernmental coordination.

**Response:** A paragraph has been added to page 9 of the Plan Summary to better explain the need for careful management of development and timely extension of utilities within the Edge Management area in coordination with York County, since most of the area is within their jurisdiction.

- **Comment:** Also consider classifying Celanese Road, Anderson Road, or other major corridors, as Redevelopment Corridors. Reconsider use of the term “redevelopment” in talking about corridors; “infill” is also important.

**Response:** Saluda Street, Textile Corridor, and Cherry Road have been identified as Redevelopment Corridors for the purpose of identifying priority redevelopment corridors. These are older corridors that are seeing a significant amount of decline, with obsolete structures and abandoned uses. Furthermore, these are gateway corridors that have had a significant amount of master planning already with strategies to encourage redevelopment and infill development. Although other major existing corridors will be monitored, the primary focus will be on the three priority redevelopment corridors. The fifth Priority Policy Direction has been changed to “Promote Redevelopment and Infill Development Along Key Corridors”.

- **Comment:** Emphasize how this Plan will be a “living document”.

**Response:** The last sentence on page 15 of the Plan has been added to address this concern.

- **Comment:** Include the use of incentives to steer development to key locations in the third bullet under the Priority Policy Direction “Achieve Sustainability”.

Response: The third bullet under “Achieve Sustainability” on page 11 of the Plan has been modified as suggested.

- Comment: Create a toolbox of incentives to spur redevelopment and apply to different areas of the City.

Response: We have identified priority investment areas on the PIZ map. In addition, several recommendations address the need for an array of incentives to support the Plan’s Community Values and Priority Policy Directions, but we are not at the point of geographically targeting specific incentives. This would be fleshed out through the development of the implementation program in upcoming months.

- Additional Changes:
  - Renamed the Plan and land use map in keeping with the Vision 2020 theme of the update process.
  - Added a transit station in Downtown Rock Hill to the land use map to be consistent with the RYC Transit Study.
  - Added descriptions for the Saluda Street and the Textile Corridor Redevelopment Corridors to the Character Area descriptions within the Land Use Element.
  - Map clarifications for the Interstate Corridor Character Area.

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## **PUBLIC HEARING**

On October 5, 2010, Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider a resolution recommending City Council adoption of **Vision 2020: The Comprehensive Plan for Rock Hill** and the **Vision 2020 Land Use Map**.

Mr. Frank Myers, 1071 Christopher Circle and member of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, gave a general overview of the Committee’s tasks and noted the three common themes that had arisen amongst all the focus groups: Grow Inside First, Well-Designed Sustainable Neighborhoods, and Better Connections.

Mrs. Christine Fisher, Senior Long Range Planner for the City of Rock Hill, presented the staff report giving an overview of the process and results.

Mr. David LeGrande, 4680 Summerlin Place, presented a report from the Housing Focus Group, providing figures regarding housing with respect to owners and renters as well as a breakdown of housing costs.

Mr. Tim Johnson, 683 Legere Court, represented the Natural Resources Focus Group and urged the Commission to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan by City Council.

Mrs. Sherron Marshall, 819 Willow Haven Court, represented the Transportation Focus Group and provided an overview of the three main focus points of this group, the need for safety, accessibility and a well-functioning system.

Mrs. Debbie Hayworth, 225 N Park Drive and President of the United Way of York County, spoke to the overall needs the Comprehensive Plan addressed in helping the citizens of York County and expressed the need for the Commission to recommend approval of the Plan by City Council.

Mr. Charles Robinson, 1966 Londonberry Drive, presented a report from the Economic Conditions Focus Group, adding that the City and Winthrop were best served by adopting the College Town Action Plan in an effort to encourage entrepreneurship and opportunities in these difficult economic times.

Mrs. Lillian Gilmore, 512 Whitner Street, member of the Steering Committee, encouraged the Commission to recommend City Council's approval of the Comprehensive Plan, adding that focus needed to be on the Saluda Street, Cherry Road, and Dave Lyle Boulevard corridors as well as the College Town Action Plan.

Mrs. Leane Skroban, 289 Notable Lane, member of the Steering Committee, noted that the Comprehensive Plan was a plan for future generations, that the City had a good park system in place with Cherry Park and Manchester Meadows, and that the City did have children's welfare in mind with respect to programs already in place.

No one spoke in opposition to the proposed Plan.

Mr. Roper expressed his thanks to all participants involved in the Comprehensive Plan process.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Planning Commission Recommendation

Following the Planning Commission public hearing at their October 5, 2010 meeting, Mr. Christopher presented the motion to approve the recommendation to City Council to adopt **Vision 2020: The Comprehensive Plan for Rock Hill** by means of a resolution. Mr. Smalls seconded the motion and the motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

### Steering Committee Recommendation

On July 22, 2010 the Steering Committee endorsed the draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan and proposed future land use map. The Steering Committee recommends that the proposed Plan and Map be considered by Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of **Vision 2020: The Comprehensive Plan for Rock Hill** and the **Vision 2020 Land Use Map**.

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## PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The following public notification actions have been taken:

- September 5, 2010 – Planning Commission public hearing advertisement published in *The Herald*.
  - October 6, 2010 – City Council public hearing advertisement published in *The Herald*.
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## ATTACHMENTS

- Public Hearing Draft of **Vision 2020: The Comprehensive Plan for Rock Hill** (Transmitted to CC on October 6, 2010), available online at [www.RockHill2020.com](http://www.RockHill2020.com) or at the Planning & Development Department in City Hall.
- Planning Commission Resolution signed October 5, 2010
- Ordinance