

Town of Clayton US 70 Corridor Plan



Draft
October 25, 2010

Planning Assistance provided by:



Introduction

The US 70 Corridor Study planning process began with delineation of the study area boundary and identification of the essential components relevant to development along the US Highway 70 corridor. The overarching theme of the study was to preserve the rural viewsheds along the corridor while promoting development standards that would preserve and enhance rural visual quality and minimize impact of future development on those essential qualities that define character of the corridor.

The successful blend of existing rural character with future development (residential/commercial/industrial) is an integral component in justifying the establishment of a corridor study. While development pressures are seen as inevitable, the Town wanted to consider development options that did not exclude economic opportunities but rather preserved and enhanced the desired visual qualities of the existing landscape with future development.

Completion of the US Highway 70 corridor has re-allocated traffic to alleviate congestion on local roads with less handling capacity. The Town of Clayton is within commuting distance to major employment centers of Raleigh/Durham and the Research Triangle Park. Living in Clayton allows residents to enjoy the many benefits of a small town, rural setting with the traveling convenience of major highway systems. This convenience will attract and create development opportunities along this major highway corridor, while also preserving the quality of place.

However, population growth brings both costs and benefits. The typical growth pattern consists of an initial spurt in residential growth followed by commercial development attracted by new household spending power. The challenge of this growth pattern is that residential growth rarely generates enough revenue to pay for services demanded. New residents need expanded services - new and improved school facilities, additional water and sewer capacity, and expanded parks and recreation facilities and programs. Commuters will want close proximity to US 70 without experiencing the noise or pollution generated by a major traffic corridor. Businesses/commercial enterprises will be attracted to the corridor to not only serve growing residential populations but the traveling public.

Quality of Life / Rural Character

The Town of Clayton maintains a small town sense of community while providing opportunities for growth and development. The Town offers a desirable, predominantly low density, rural lifestyle. A primary goal is to promote and enhance the quality of life experience by protecting the community's unique rural character and social fabric while enhancing the community's appeal for new residential and business investment.

Multi-Jurisdictional Strategies

This corridor plan is intended as supplemental guidance for multi-disciplinary planning coordination among the various stakeholders within the area including, but not limited to the Town of Clayton, Johnston County, and the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the NC Department of Transportation and other agencies / organizations that can contribute to proactive development along the corridor.

Study Scope

The project consists of preparing a US Highway 70 Corridor Plan for the highway corridor from the US Highway 70 / US 70 Business interchange located east of Clayton in a westerly direction to the eastern boundary of the JCMH / NC 42 West Small Area Plan study boundary at the US 70 / NC 42 interchange.

The approximate outer limits of the corridor study area are 2000' either side of the highway centerline with an expansion to an approximate ½ mile area of influence centered on each of the two highway interchanges (US Highway 70 / US 70 Business and US Highway 70 / Ranch Road) within the study area boundary. Actual study limits are based on parcel boundaries and zoning jurisdiction; therefore some variation in width exists.

The plan is intended to serve as a policy guide for future land use and land development decision-making along the highway corridor. The plan articulates development goals and objectives for the corridor against which short-term decisions regarding zoning, subdivision, utilities, stormwater management, transportation, capital improvements, and open space/recreational planning can be measured. Once adopted, the US 70 Corridor Plan will be of particular assistance to the town council, planning board, town staff and citizens in ensuring consistency for proposed zoning requests in accordance with requirements of NCGS 160A-383.

The plan considers, analyzes and integrates policies and recommendations from existing land use-related plans and other existing town plans and policies. A particular focus of the plan is implementation of best management practices, land use controls, and development strategies that will increase immediate and preserve future opportunities for economic development while protecting the visual quality of viewsheds along the highway corridor and water quality within streams and water bodies.

Implementation objectives outline recommended ordinance revisions to be considered to meet land use development goals along the corridor. To accomplish implementation objectives, the Town intends to create an overlay zoning district within the Unified Development Code. The proposed overlay district would apply overarching development measures to underlying zoning districts to ensure corridor plan goals and objectives are implemented. Policy objectives and implementation principles are intended to be incorporated into Town policy documents and ordinances.

Land Use Classifications

Goal: To create a mix of land use classifications framed with conservation, interconnectivity, mixed use, conservation, and smart growth land development principles.

Classification	Description
Low Density Residential	1 to 4 units per acre
Medium Density Residential	> 4 to 8 units per acre
High Density Residential	> 8+ units per acre
Commercial	Retail service, hotel/motel
Conservation	Development is discouraged to protect environmental or aesthetic qualities
Light Industrial	Industrial park development comprised of uses that are not nuisance generators
Office and Institutional	Institutional / office uses (including potential school sites)
Recreational / park	Open space with trail linkage and passive recreation use by adjoining/nearby residential areas

Implementation Strategies

Plan for appropriate future land uses while respecting existing land uses, where appropriate.

Category	Description
Intergovernmental Coordination	Continue work with Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) to approve Western Johnston County Comprehensive Transportation Plan with a goal to assuring safe and efficient movement of citizens utilizing all forms of transportation.
Roadway Improvements	Emphasis on interchanges and major intersections, with connectivity to major roadways and interconnectivity between uses. Promote single access points for commercial areas and limit driveway cuts within 660' (1/8th mile) of interchanges to manage access and support safe and efficient traffic flow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Management 	Establish specific standards to control vehicular access near highway interchanges. Plan for interconnection of streets between adjacent uses as development occurs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance from Interchange 	Parcels with less than 400 linear feet of frontage on a thoroughfare may have no more than one point of access; one additional driveway for each 400 linear feet of additional frontage. Recommendation: increase the frontage to 1,320' (1/4 mile) for a parcel with a single point of access at a signalized intersection.
Corridor Landscape Buffers	Require minimum 100 foot depth vegetated buffer adjacent to highway right of way. Require protection of existing trees where appropriate and where there are no existing trees to preserve, require additional planting to frame scenic views and screen objectionable views,
Protection of Natural Resources	Provide protection to sensitive natural/historic areas, cluster structures to reduce infrastructure costs, reduce land development costs/consumption of land resources, and protect prime farm land. Promote/endorse conservation subdivisions.
Environmental Features	Limit development and prohibit (except limited activity) uses within corridor overlay by increasing stream buffer requirements from 50' to 100'. Consider increasing building setbacks for underlying zoning classifications.
Preservation of Scenic Byway	US 70 currently classified as NC Scenic Byway. Bylaw regulations prohibit signs of any nature, except those advertising free coffee, within 600' of highway right of way.
Quality of Life / Rural Character	Districts within the overlay are intended to create a sense of character that is fluid, but restrictive enough to promote the rural character of the area. Buffering, signage, architectural guidelines, access management and density will provide development opportunities while protecting the natural environment and desired quality of life.
Developmental Standards	Limit clear cutting of trees prior to development. Develop appearance guidelines/standards for new development along the corridor and within interchange areas, including building heights relative to the finished grade of US 70. Set standards for location/ height of wireless communication towers.
Architectural Guidelines	Limit height of buildings visible from the corridor to 60' above finished grade of highway center line.

Development Orientation along Corridor

The US 70 Corridor Plan proposes land development standards that promote development potential along the corridor while also taking into consideration the scenic nature of the viewsheds and adjoining rural properties that are adjacent to the corridor. All development along the corridor would be subject to a minimum 100' vegetative buffer along the corridor right of way. A minimum 100' from top of bank stream buffer is also proposed.

To better explain the rationale for assigning land use categories, the US 70 Corridor was divided into five study area (oriented east to west) starting at the US 70 / US 70 Business interchange.

Sub Area 1 – US 70 / US 70 Business

All land uses at this interchange, in keeping with the existing land use pattern, are categorized as industrial. The US 70 Business median break at Gordon Road provides the first full-vehicular access opportunity to undeveloped land on the west side of the highway. The highway median break provides the first logical industrial park access point. Undeveloped land on both the east and west sides of US 70 business are appropriate for continuing industrial development. Future development should provide for stream buffering, wetland preservation, and tree preservation/buffering along both the US 70 and US 70 Business road frontages.

Sub Area 2 – US 70 Business to Little Creek Church Road

North

Land uses along this segment of the corridor consist primarily of low-density residential uses (less than 4 units per acre) with industrial uses proposed between Peele Road and Pony Farm Road. Industrial uses are adjacent to or in close proximity to an already approved industrial subdivision off Pony Farm Road and the new bakery site currently under construction. This proposed industrial development will occur with road frontage along Pony Farm Road. Industrial development is also proposed, in an industrial park setting, where US 70 Business and US 70 intersect. This proposed industrial development will be provided access, via a median break, to allow traffic to cross US 70 Business to Gordon Road.

As is required along the entire US 70 corridor, all future development would provide a 100' buffer along the highway corridor. Stream buffers would be a minimum of 100' top of bank.

South

The Town of Clayton has limited planning and zoning jurisdiction along the south side of the corridor within this area. Proposed land use consists of low density residential in keeping with the existing land use pattern and the lack of public sewer to the area. All development within the Town's planning jurisdiction would be subject to corridor and stream buffer requirements as well as protection/mitigation of wetland impacts. CAMPO data identifies Little Creek Church Road as a Major Thoroughfare, but is classified as needing improvement to on road facilities for potential bike lane.

Sub Area 3 – Little Creek Church Road to Ranch Road

Northwest

This section of the corridor is dominated by areas of conservation, wetlands, stream/creek buffers, and other development limitations. Areas suitable for development are proposed for medium density (5-8 units per acre) residential along Ranch Road with low-density (less than 4 units per acre) residential in other areas. Proposed greenways within areas classified as conservation provide linkage along Little Creek to areas northwest and south of the project boundaries. The NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Water Quality has classified Little Creek as a 303(d) impaired stream, although the cause is undetermined.

Northeast

Proposed for low-density (<4 units per acre) residential development. Environmental constraints will affect development potential.

Southeast

The majority of lands south of the corridor are outside the Town's planning and zoning jurisdiction. In keeping with the character of the area, low-density (<4 units per acre) residential development is proposed.

Southwest

This area represents the greatest diversity in proposed land uses while also representing a significant development potential modification compared to existing land uses. Proposed land use classifications in this area include high-density (>9 units per acre) residential, medium-density (4-8 units per acre) residential, recreational/park, office and institutional uses, and commercial.

Two new vehicular access points off Ranch Road are also proposed. The first access would parallel the commercial and medium-density residential land uses, while still providing access to high-access residential uses. This initial access point would be directly adjacent to the proposed commercial land use west of Ranch Road. The second access off Ranch Road would provide access to potential office and institutional land use development, including access to a potential neighborhood park. CAMPO data identifies Ranch Road as a Major Thoroughfare (south of Highway 70) and a Boulevard (north of Highway 70), both are classified as needing improvement to on road facilities for potential bike lane.

Sub Area 4 – Ranch Road to Barber Mill Road

Northwest

Proposed for low-density residential development, the plan suggests extension of Stephanie Lane to connect to Country Lane. A connecting road would provide for multiple points of access off Barber Mil Road and eliminate the congestion of proposed development needing to re-route for isolated access.

Northeast

Proposed land uses consist primarily of low-density (<4 units per acre) and medium-density (5-8 units per acre) residential development. Environmental constraints, including floodplain and stream buffers, will impact development potential. Due to the existing narrow, winding condition of Canyon Road, no interconnectivity is recommended to either Stephanie Lane or Country Lane. Greenway access is proposed along Little Creek, which links areas NE of the project area, southeastwardly along Little Creek.

Southeast

Additional commercial development along the US 70 corridor is within this area; both adjacent to each other; bisected by Ranch Road. Other proposed land uses include high-density (>9 units per acre) and medium-density (5-8 units per acre) residential development. A new vehicular access point would provide access to the proposed commercial use area; this access point functions as a potential lighted intersection allowing interconnectivity via a stoplight to each of the commercial nodes along Ranch Road. Environmental conditions, including a 100' stream buffer, would impact development potential.

Southwest

This area is proposed for residential development including low-density (<4 unit per acre) and medium-density (5-8 units per acre). Medium density residential development would be located along Barber Mill Road with lower density (<4 units per acre) residential development adjacent. Woodside drive would be proposed to connect to Town Acres Road, providing interconnectivity between Ranch Road and Barber Mill, while also allowing development potential to existing land locked parcels.

Sub Area 5 – Barber Mill Road to the JCMH/42 West Small Area Boundary

Northwest

All three densities of residential development (low, medium and high) are proposed for this sub-area. A future access road is shown connecting from NC 42 through commercial/office development within the JCMH/42 West SAP to Corbett Road to the east. This future vehicular route would provide for an alternate means of circulation within an area expected to experience relatively high intensities of development. The proposed road alignment would continue southeasterly from a stub road within the JCMH/42 West SAP to Corbett Road; bisecting the proposed high-density (8+ units per acre).

Northeast

Only low-density (<4 units per acre) residential development is proposed for this area.

Southeast

This area is proposed for residential development with the majority at 5-8 units per acre and the remainder at less than 4 units per acre. CAMPO data identifies Barber Mill Road as a Major Thoroughfare, but is classified as needing improvement to on road facilities for potential bike lane.

Southwest

This area is planned for residential development, the majority of which is low-density (<4 units per acre) with some medium density (5-8 units per acre) residential development.

NC Department of Transportation - Corridor Aesthetics

The NC Department of Transportation has an existing “Sustainable Landscape Design and Development” Plan for ER-5100DE US 70 Clayton Bypass. This plan proposes roadside environmental and sustainable design and aesthetics improvements with the inclusion of small flowering trees, evergreen trees, deciduous trees, native grasses and perennial varieties within the corridor right of way.

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