

## REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

### HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**MEETING DATE:** March 21, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Draft East Flat Rock Community Plan

**PRESENTER:** Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director

**ATTACHMENTS:** Yes

1. Executive Summary of Draft East Flat Rock Community Plan

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

The East Flat Rock (EFR) Community Plan Advisory Committee, formed by the Board of Commissioners in 2015, was responsible for developing and recommending a community specific comprehensive plan for the East Flat Rock Planning Area. The committee met monthly over an eighteen-month period, held two public input sessions, and conducted a mailed survey to all property owners in the planning area.

On March 16, 2017, the EFR Community Plan Advisory Committee presented the draft plan to the Planning Board. The Planning Board provided additional opportunities for public input including an online survey and two additional public input meetings held in the King Street Meeting Room and at Hillandale Elementary School. A mailed notice was also sent to owners of property with a recommended zoning change. On November 16, 2017 the Planning Board voted unanimously to send forth a favorable recommendation on the Draft EFR Community Plan.

Staff presented the completed plan to the Board of Commissioners at the February mid-month meeting, at which time the Board requested a month to analyze and consider the plan before discussion of its adoption or continued review.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

No action is needed other than to determine the Board's next step (continued discussion, public input meeting, or adoption). Two possible motions are provided for the Board's consideration.

**Suggested Motion:** I move the Board adopt the East Flat Rock Community Plan as presented. I further move that the goals and objectives be reviewed by County appointed committees and boards for their implementation if deemed appropriate.

**Alternative Motion:** I move that the Board continue its discussion by scheduling a public hearing regarding the Draft East Flat Rock Community Plan.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Henderson County 2020 Comprehensive Plan (hereinafter “Comprehensive Plan”) was adopted on July 6, 2004 (as amended through September 16, 2009). The Comprehensive Plan identified the need to plan for individual communities within the County. The community planning areas were prioritized based on anticipated growth and relation to the Growth Management Strategy (established by the Comprehensive Plan).

The East Flat Rock Community Plan is a community-specific comprehensive plan outlining goals related to:

- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Agriculture
- Housing
- Community Facilities and Public Services,
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Land Use and Development
- Community Character and Design

The purpose of the East Flat Rock Community Plan Advisory Committee, as outlined by the charter, was to serve as an advisory role to the Board of Commissioners whereby it would recommend Planning Area specific policies. The Committee formed recommendations and action strategies for each element of the Plan based on input solicited from the public, County staff, and relevant experts. The following is a summary of the Plan’s recommendations and action strategies:

### **3.1: Natural and Cultural Resources**

- **Protect land quality and access within the EFR Planning Area.**
  - Support conservation efforts in the Green River Game Lands.
  - Encourage open space through voluntary conservation and development design practices.
  - Encourage increased access to the Green River Game Lands. The County should work with the North Carolina Department of Conservation to promote the area as a viable recreation opportunity. The County should also work with Duke Energy to provide public access on the existing right of way leading to the Green River Game Lands.
  - Encourage the protection of surrounding land and water resources that may not be within the East Flat Rock boundary. There are many important natural resources in the County that have a direct impact on health and quality of life within East Flat Rock. The County should support those efforts and related recommendations in adjacent community plans.
- **Create incentives/opportunities for preservation of historic and cultural sites within the EFR Planning Area.**
  - Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures in downtown East Flat Rock. Where practical and cost effective, the County should support redevelopment efforts.
  - Work with the Henderson County Historic Resource Commission to help identify important historical sites and preservation opportunities.

### **3.2: Agricultural**

- **Support existing farms by providing public education as a means of supporting farmers and protecting farmland.**
- **Reduce farmland loss within the Planning Area.**

### **3.3: Housing**

- **Improve development standards for manufactured homes and existing manufactured home parks within the East Flat Rock Planning Area.**
  - Consider suspending new manufactured home parks within the East Flat Rock Planning Area for a period of time, within all legal and jurisdictional means.
  - Work with manufactured home park owners to encourage improvements to existing manufactured home parks to enhance the health, welfare, and safety of residents.
    - i. Pave any existing unpaved internal roads.
    - ii. Ensure safe and adequate utility connections
    - iii. Provide acceptable trash collection services
    - iv. Provide landscaping and buffering
  - Better promote the voluntary removal program for abandoned or dilapidated manufactured homes. The County has an existing program that provides financial assistance for the voluntary removal of dilapidated manufactured homes. Provide education materials on the program through County website, newsletters, and social media.
- **Expand and diversify housing options within the East Flat Rock Planning Area.**
  - The County should continue to encourage a mix of housing options in the East Flat Rock planning area that accommodate a range of income levels. The East Flat Rock Planning Area's housing mix is not congruent with the mix of the rest of the county. When possible and appropriate, the county should seek to encourage development in the planning area that would help its housing mix reflect the county's as a whole.
  - The County should encourage high-density housing development when possible as an affordable alternative to mobile home parks.

### **3.4: Community Facilities and Public Services**

- **Consider providing sidewalks in commercially zoned areas.**
- **Support extensions of public water and sewer lines into East Flat Rock.**
- **Community facilities and public services should be strategically located in area identified as local commercial, industrial, and or office institutional.**
- **Improve level of service of existing and proposed parks.**
- **Form a community and regional greenway network connecting public recreational facilities within the East Flat Rock area.**

### **3.5: Transportation**

- **Improve the transportation network in the East Flat Rock Planning Area.**
  - The County, through its involvement in the French Broad River MPO, should prioritize projects within the East Flat Rock Planning Area in accordance with Plan goals.

- Improve identified intersections based on recommended studies. The conditions of the following intersections pose automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian safety concerns and should be studied and improved:
  - i. Blue Ridge Road and Spartanburg Highway
  - ii. Access management along Spartanburg Highway and Upward Road
- Facilitate safer automobile movement and alleviate traffic stacking issues near Hillandale Elementary during school peak hour traffic.
- The County, through its involvement in the French Broad River MPO, should prioritize bicycle projects within the East Flat Rock Planning Area in accordance with Plan goals.
- Review public transit periodically to identify service provision changes or increases.

### **3.6: Economic Development**

- **Direct commercial and industrial growth to areas where community facilities and public services are present or anticipated.**
- **Support industrial development within the East Flat Rock Planning Area.**
  - Work with the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development and others to promote Industrial/Commercial Development in the East Flat Rock Planning Area.
  - Support existing businesses and industries.
  - Expand manufacturing training opportunities available at Blue Ridge Community College to provide a more competitive workforce.
  - Work to provide affordable housing for the County workforce.
  - Support Dana Community Plan recommendations for industrial and commercial growth near Interstate 26 and Upward Road.
- **Address economic development in the East Flat Rock Planning Area.**
  - Revitalize Downtown East Flat Rock into a destination for shopping and dining.
  - Create East Flat Rock gateway entrances on Spartanburg Highway and Upward Road.

### **3.7: Land Use and Development**

- **Residential Two (R2):** Replace Estate Residential (R-40) zoning with Residential Two Rural (R2R) zoning west of Greenville Highway within the “island” of East Flat Rock. In addition, replace a small section of Residential One (R1) on the western edge of the existing R40 district with R2. (See Map 7).
- **Residential Two (R2).** Replace existing R1 with R2 west of US 25, south of Tabor Road, east of GE facility and north of the highway interchange with Spartanburg Highway and US 25.
- **Residential Two (R2).** Replace R1 west of Spartanburg Highway, south of West Blue Ridge Road, and bounded by the Planning Area Boundary to the west.
- **Community Commercial (CC).** To encourage increased commercial development, expand the existing CC zoning along Spartanburg Highway to two parcels wide on the east and west sides of the highway. Also connect the CC zoning south of Roper Road to the existing CC near the interchange at Spartanburg Highway and US 25. This will replace R1.
- **Office/Institutional (O/I).** Replace R40 with O/I south of West Blue Ridge Road and west of Rocky Fork Road. This area includes Hillandale Elementary and Flat Rock Middle School.

### **3.8: Community Character and Design**

- **Promote development compatible with the historic character of the East Flat Rock Planning Area.**
  - Identify community character features and involve community organizations in the promotion of their preservation or enhancement. Publish and distribute to interest groups (developers, neighborhood associations, community action groups, land conservation agencies, etc.) maps of community features that should be preserved or enhanced, including any areas preferred for acquisition. Community organizations should publicize and seek support for preservation and enhancement of identified community character features.
  - Adopt lighting regulations for nonresidential uses in the East Flat Rock Planning Area. The County should adopt lighting regulations to mitigate the negative impacts of lighting and preserve the Planning Area’s rural character and natural setting. Lighting mitigation standards should be enforced to prevent light from nonresidential property from shining onto residential property.
  
- **Establish Design Standards**
  - Establish design standards for nonresidential uses. Design standards should be established to ensure nonresidential development is unified and cohesive, consistent with the rural character and natural setting of the Planning Area. The following standards should apply to nonresidential uses/developments (excluding industrial uses/developments) containing more than 15,000 square feet of floor area:
    - i. **Façade Materials.** No unfinished block or plywood shall be permitted on any façade facing a public street. Decorative block is permitted on a façade facing a public street. Natural materials (brick, stone (native and manufactured), wood (clapboard/shingles), stucco, etc.) are preferred on façades. Materials which are not preferred for façades include: light gauge vinyl siding, unpainted aluminum siding, wood composition board, and asphalt shingles. Fluorescent/neon finishes should be avoided.
    - ii. **Articulation.** Vertical and horizontal articulation (bump ins/outs) shall be required where any blank wall (those without windows and doors) facing a public street exceeds 50 feet in length. Blank walls should be avoided by using windows/doors, trellises, arcades, material changes, awnings or other similar features.