

## PREFACE

While the preparation of a comprehensive plan is encouraged by North Carolina Legislation, there are broader and more important reasons to engage in the planning process. Basically, planning begins with understanding your community and its people and learning how to care for them. Local government plans and planning affect people's lives. Tough choices must be made about the natural, manmade, and financial resources in the community. The county's budget should be compared to the plan to ensure that public money will be spent in accordance with the community's goals and objectives.

The planning process also serves to educate us about ourselves, our attitudes towards others, and our willingness to share a sense of community. Planning is often promoted as a means of community decision-making through public participation. But planning also may involve conflict and friction because it may divide us into opposing groups. Some conflict in the planning process is good. It stimulates us to think and reminds us of the need to understand and tolerate, and even support, the opinions of others.

A county should not undertake the preparation of a land use plan without understanding that a plan should be:

1. Comprehensive in setting goals and objectives for all aspects of the community.
2. Part of a continuous planning process that is timely and responsive to the needs and desires of the community.
3. The legal basis for land use regulations and a guide for a capital improvements plan for municipal budgeting.

There are commonly accepted reasons both to plan and not to plan. These should be understood, and are summarized as follows:

### **Reasons Not To Plan**

- Do not expect a plan to produce immediate changes.
- Do not plan because you believe it will be a solution to business/industrial recruitment.
- Do not plan simply because it is the popular thing to do.
- Do not adopt a plan to accomplish limited or single purpose goals.
- Do not plan to reform government. Planning is not a solution to bad politics.

## **Reasons to Plan**

- To promote common sense and intelligent community thought.
- For sound community management (i.e., to manage development and public infrastructure).
- To protect property values.
- To encourage citizen participation.
- To coordinate commercial/industrial development to other public/private development activities.
- To direct the physical appearance of the county.
- To promote regional intergovernmental cooperation.
- To promote a community pride.

Once the plan is prepared, the county must realize that the plan is not the end of the process. The county must continuously work at accomplishing plan implementation and establishing an effective planning program. Franklin County must view the preparation of this document as the first step in a continually evolving process.