

IV. Current Major Issues and Solution Recommendations

This section contains discussion of major issues identified by the Task Force during the planning process and possible solution recommendations. Maps 27 and 28, which follow the recommendation text, show the recommendations that can be displayed on a map but the text below also contains recommendations that are not well suited for mapping. Additionally, some responses to Citizen Comments (Appendix B) contain recommendations and should be referred to for further information and during implementation actions.

Goal: In the future, the planning area should be well served by reliable infrastructure to accommodate orderly, planned growth. The planning area will retain the core village area that will be the center of community life. An efficient multi-modal transportation system will operate in the area and commercial and light industrial uses both in the planning area and nearby will provide job opportunities to area residents. There will be a mix of housing types and sizes that will be economically accessible to a broad spectrum of working people. Parks and greenspace will be connected by a system of greenways that will allow people to enjoy a high-quality outdoor environment while also serving as corridors for wildlife migration.

A. Water and Sewer

Objective: Orderly and planned expansion of the sewer system and a sufficient public water supply system.

The availability of water and sewer systems is one of the primary factors influencing the characteristics of development. Areas that are not served by water and sewer systems generally develop at very low densities because water must be obtained from individual wells and sewage must be disposed of on-site via, predominantly, an on-site septic system. Additionally, non-residential development tends to be very limited in areas served by on-site well and septic systems and often non-residential development is dependent upon the availabilities of fire service levels.

Efland is the only area under Orange County's jurisdiction that has a county-owned public sewage disposal system. Because of this, the planning area represents one of the areas of Orange County where higher density development is a viable option within the County's planning jurisdiction.

Efland residents have expressed concerns over the amount of time the sewer project first initiated in 1984 has taken to implement. Additionally, some residents would like to see all six phases shown on Map 13 implemented, not just Phases 1A, 1B, and 2. The need for a long range Master Plan and associated funding sources for water and sewer has been discussed.

The Task Force is supportive of planned growth occurring within the planning area but existing limitations on water and sewer services need to be addressed prior to permitting additional growth. Following are recommendations regarding water and sewer issues:

1. The 1984 plan needs to be updated. Areas to be designated Efland Transition Area, Mixed Use, or Economic Development Area on the Future Land Use Map of this plan (Map 30) should receive priority for water and sewer services.
2. An engineering study of the existing OAWS water systems should be completed. The county and OAWS should work cooperatively on water supply issues. The following considerations should be addressed as part of the study:
 - a) The water system area should be coordinated with sewer system areas and with designated growth areas.
 - b) The water system should have volume and pressure sufficient for both potable water and fire suppression purposes. Level of service standards for water pressure that would be adequate for fire suppression needs should be developed and adopted as part of the study process. Changes to the existing system to accomplish these objectives should be identified and implemented.
 - c) A policy should be adopted requiring that future expansions to the water system have adequate pipe sizes and pressure to ensure an ample water supply for both potable water and fire suppression. Future growth projections must be taken into account when designing the system.
 - d) OAWS has developed system capacities through agreements with other utility providers and large capacity wells but how those allocations are distributed from an engineering and area standpoint are yet unresolved.
3. A comprehensive long range Master Plan for water and sewer should be developed for the Planning Area. The following considerations should be addressed:
 - a) OAWS and the City of Mebane are not parties to the Water and Sewer Management Planning and Boundary Agreement (WSMPBA) which guides the placement of water and sewer facilities within Orange County. Orange County must act in accordance with the WSMPBA, which greatly affects Cheeks Township as a large portion of the Orange County Primary Service Area lies within Cheeks Township. In fact, a portion of the planning area is within Orange County's Primary Service Area while other portions of the planning area are outside of the Primary Service Area. This has great implications on where Orange County can place water and sewer lines.
 - i. Orange County should work cooperatively with the other parties of the WSMPBA, OAWS, and the City of Mebane to include OAWS and the City of Mebane in the WSMPBA. Any changes to the service area boundaries should be carefully analyzed during this process to ensure proper and realistic boundaries.
 - ii. As part of this process, agreements among service providers should be made as to where the various separate systems will operate.
 - b) The Master Plan should specifically address which area(s) will receive priority to encumber system capacity. Capacity should be allowed to be encumbered by areas that will promote orderly growth (e.g., "leapfrogging" of the sewer system should be discouraged). A policy decision regarding how capacity

will be divided among residential and non-residential uses should be made. Ample capacity should be reserved for non-residential uses.

- c) There should be an objective to encourage existing development to tie-in to the water and sewer systems when they are available in the area and a requirement that new development in an area served by the water and/or sewer systems utilize the system(s).
 - d) A policy regarding the self-sufficiency of the water and sewer systems should be adopted. The systems should operate in such a way that revenues cover the costs of operating and maintaining the systems.
4. Extending water and sewer infrastructure throughout the planning area is desirable if other recommendations in this plan are also adopted. Specifically, recommendations regarding site design, overall density, and design guidelines would need to be considered in any expansion plans.
- a) Although a portion of the area is outside of the Small Area Plan planning boundary, consideration should be given to extend sewer infrastructure to the Mt. Willing/Interstate 40-85 interchange north of the Interstate. Additionally, permitting limited non-residential growth on the south side of the Interstate west of Mt. Willing Road in the vicinity of West Ten Road should be studied given the proximity of the area to Gravelly Hill Middle School and West Ten Soccer Park.

B. Land Use

Objective: Preservation of community character while allowing for planned, sustainable residential and non-residential growth.

Note: Implementation of most of the Land Use recommendations that follow will require amendments to existing development regulations such as the Land Use Element Text and Map, Zoning Ordinance Text, and Zoning Map. Additionally, Impervious Surface Limit regulations (contained in the Zoning Ordinance) will need to be studied and modified to implement the recommendations pertaining to density increases.

How land is used is a major factor in many aspects of people's lives. Land Use directly affects people's quality of life in a variety of ways. Community character, traffic generation and flow, availability of services, and the quality of the natural environment are all affected by Land Use decisions. Indeed, one of local government's principal powers is the authority to control land development so that growth is managed in such a way that negative impacts are minimized and/or mitigated.

As mentioned in "A" above, the Task Force is generally supportive of planned growth, provided that growth occurs in a managed and sustainable fashion. The Task Force is also generally supportive of the conversion of residential structures on Highway 70 into low impact office and commercial uses. However, any potential conversions of residential land uses into commercial

uses along Highway 70 should minimize impacts to the existing residential component along the Highway and the importance of existing residential uses should continue to be recognized.

There is concern that the eclectic, vernacular character of Efland be preserved to the greatest extent possible. There is no desire on the part of Efland residents to become a homogenous, "anywhere U.S.A." community. There are strong feelings that the charm that makes Efland unique should be preserved. Development opportunities in the planning area should be based on Smart Growth and environmental stewardship principles.

One of the factors affecting growth in the southeast portion of the planning area is the Critical Area line for the once-proposed Seven Mile Creek Reservoir. At this time, a reservoir is not planned along Seven Mile Creek. However, lands acquired in the vicinity of Seven-Mile Creek are planned for a future Nature Preserve/low-impact park and land use planning regulations south of Interstate 40/85 still need to reflect these environmental constraints.

Map 29 highlights proposed changes to the Adopted Future Land Use map. If the recommended changes are adopted, Map 30 would become the Future Land Use map for the planning area. Descriptions of proposed new Future Land Use categories are found immediately below. The descriptions of adopted Future Land Use categories are found in the chart on page 50.

Economic Development Area. Land in transition which has been specifically targeted for economic development activity consisting of light industrial, distribution, office, service/retail uses, flex space (typically one-story buildings designed, constructed, and marketed as suitable for uses as offices but able to accommodate other uses; e.g. warehouse, showroom, manufacturing assembly or similar operations), governmental uses, and high density (multi-family) residential uses. Such areas are located adjacent to interstate and major arterial highways, and subject to special design criteria and performance standards. (Note: This definition is different than the adopted "Economic Development Area" definition. This proposed definition includes high density (multi family) residential uses as a prospective use. The adopted definition does not include residential uses).

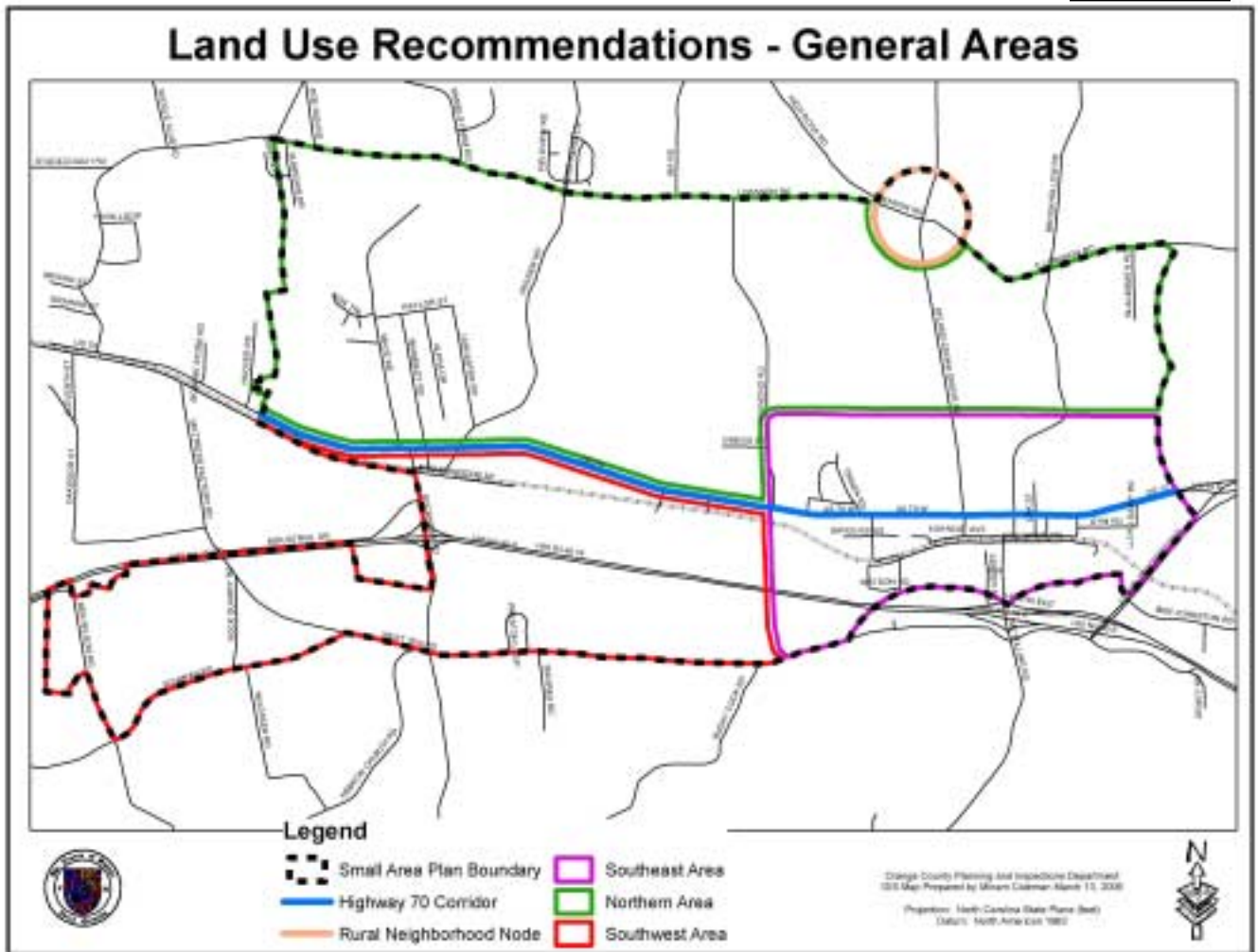
Efland Transition Area. Land located in areas that are in the process of changing from rural to village densities, that are suitable for higher densities and could be provided with public utilities and services within the next twenty (20) years or where such utilities and services are already present. Non-residential uses implemented in accordance with overlay districts may be appropriate. (Note: See "Highway 70 Corridor" subsection for more information on potential overlay district).

Efland Transition Area Reserve. Land located within Orange County's water and sewer Primary Service Areas as provided by the "Water and Sewer Management, Planning and Boundary Agreement" and Map but outside of designated Efland Transition areas. This area is appropriate for low intensity and low density residential development when private well and septic systems are used. Off-site ground absorption sewage disposal systems or package sewage treatment plants may be allowed based on established conditions. If public water and sewer services become available, village-type densities are suitable.

Mixed Use. Land located in areas served or to be served by public water and sewer where a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses are appropriate. Residential uses within Mixed Use areas should have a minimum density of six (6) units per acre.

The following are recommendations pertaining to land use. The planning area has been divided into general geographic areas for land use recommendations. Map 26 depicts the location of the geographic areas discussed below. Please note that the boundaries on Map 26 are general in nature for user orientation purposes and are not intended to be absolute boundaries.

Map 26



Highway 70 Corridor

The Highway 70 corridor is an important east-west transportation route. A variety of land uses, including residential uses, are located along the corridor. Balancing residential and non-residential uses along the Highway 70 corridor is an important aspect of preserving the community character of the planning area. The following recommendations are made regarding the Highway 70 corridor:

1. A mix of uses should be allowed along the Highway 70 corridor but non-residential uses should be low-impact (i.e., low traffic generators, etc.) office and commercial types of uses. In order to achieve this, a corridor overlay plan and zoning district should be created. The plan/zoning district should incorporate the following ideas:
 - a) Additional mixed use and urban development should be served by the sanitary sewer system.
 - b) In order to protect community character while permitting appropriate growth, low impact non-residential uses such as offices should be encouraged. High traffic generating uses should not be allowed. Limits on the amount of permitted parking should be established and parking should be located at the sides or rears of buildings rather than directly in front of the buildings.
 - c) Because they are not in keeping with existing community character and tend to be high traffic generators, 'formula' (i.e., 'chain' or franchise) restaurants and/or drive through restaurants should not be permitted along the Highway 70 corridor unless they are implemented in a manner that modifies the typical design to blend with the community.
 - d) The number of curb cuts along Highway 70 should be minimized. Uses should be allowed only one curb cut on the Highway and/or be connected as part of the frontage road access management system. Additionally, opportunities for re-development and the re-combination of small lots should be identified and encouraged.
 - e) The corridor overlay plan should include a streetscape plan and design guidelines for new buildings and uses. The guidelines should encourage appropriate conversion of existing residential structures into commercial uses so that the feel of a residential corridor is preserved. The guidelines should also address signage standards to be applied to the corridor. The current eclectic, vernacular character of the area should be preserved and homogenous design should be discouraged.
 - f) The corridor overlay plan should balance commercial and residential uses. The Highway 70 corridor should not be permitted to become a predominantly commercial corridor.
 - g) The corridor overlay plan should address how to allow the expansion of existing appropriate commercial uses that are not in conformance with current zoning regulations ("nonconforming uses").
 - h) New or redeveloping non-residential uses should utilize existing housing stock and/or build at a scale and character that complements the existing architecture.
 - i) Non-residential uses in the Highway 70 corridor should be encouraged first at the following intersections: Buckhorn Road, Frazier Road, Richmond Road, and Efland-

Cedar Grove Road. Community scale uses would be appropriate at these intersections.

Southeast Portion of Planning Area

The southeast portion of the planning area contains large tracts of land currently in agricultural use. Residents have long viewed the area as a “gateway” into the core of Efland. The character of the gateway is an important factor in the perception of Efland as a rural village.

The southeast portion of the planning area also enjoys easy access to major transportation facilities including Interstate 40/85 and the US 70 Connector. Because of this, development potential for the area is high. There is a desire among residents of the area for managed, orderly growth in conjunction with the desire to preserve the character of the area. Both desires can be accomplished if development is done in a context sensitive manner. The following recommendations are made regarding the southeast portion of the planning area:

1. The southeast portion of the planning area should be considered for “Mixed Use” designation to be developed only when public water and sewer systems are available in the area.
2. Guidelines for site and architectural design should be developed and adopted prior to development proposals being accepted for the area. The guidelines should include, at a minimum, policies on the following issues:
 - Façade materials
 - Architectural details
 - Impervious surface limits
 - Landscaping and buffering
 - Preservation of open space
 - Access Management
 - Signage
 - Site orientation
3. Non-residential uses should be allowed on Southern Drive between Mt. Willing Road and Gaines Chapel Road.
4. The status of the Seven Mile Creek Reservoir should be decided and if a reservoir will not be created along Seven Mile Creek in the future, the Critical Area line should be reevaluated. The Critical Watershed status of the lands adjacent to the southeast portion of the planning area affects their potential for development. The following recommendations are made if the Critical Watershed line is revised:
 - a) Growth served by public water and sewer should be allowed north of the Interstate in the vicinity of the Mt. Willing Road/Interstate 40-85 interchange. (A revision to the WSMPBA Map would be required to implement this recommendation).

- b) Permitting limited non-residential growth on Mt. Willing Road on the south side of the Interstate in the vicinity of West Ten Road should be studied given the proximity of the area to Gravelly Hill Middle School and West Ten Soccer Park. (A revision to the WSMPBA Map would be required to implement this recommendation).
- c) The need for additional water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be evaluated since Seven Mile Creek would continue to be a water supply watershed.

Southwest Portion of Planning Area

The City of Mebane annexed a parcel of land in the southwest portion of the planning area after the planning area boundary was established. The annexed parcel is labeled on Map 27. As was discussed in the Water and Sewer System portions of this small area plan, Orange County and the City of Mebane have a Utility Service Agreement pertaining to the existing Economic Development Area. The following recommendations are made regarding the southwest portion of the planning area:

1. The land use classification of the area designated as “3” on Map 12 should be changed from Commercial/Industrial Node to Economic Development with future water and sewer service to be provided by the City of Mebane.
2. The land use classification of the area designated as “6b” on Map 12 should be changed to Mixed Use with future water and sewer service to be provided by the City of Mebane. (Note that this area is not designated as a Primary Service Area on the current WSMPBA Map; Orange County action on providing water and sewer service to area 6b will require revisions to the WSMPBA map).

Northern Portion of Planning Area

Much of the northern portion of the planning area was previously designated as 10- and 20-Year Transition Areas. Additionally, much of the north portion of the planning area is within Orange County’s Primary Service Area for water and sewer services under the WSMPBA. The following are recommendations pertaining to the northern portion of the planning area:

1. Change the 10- and 20-Year Transition Area designation to “Efland Transition Area.”
2. Change the portion of the planning area north of the “Efland Transition Area” area but within the WSMPBA Primary Service Area to “Efland Transition Area Reserve.”
3. If the Water and Sewer Management Planning and Boundary Agreement is revised in the future, as is recommended in the Water and Sewer recommendations, the portions of the

planning area that not currently in Orange County's Primary Service Area should be designated as Primary Service Area.

4. New residential subdivisions choosing to develop under existing density regulations (1 unit per acre unless density bonuses related to affordable housing are awarded) should be cluster subdivisions served by public or private water and sewer systems Cluster subdivisions allow for preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive features while permitting a reasonable amount of development on the overall parcel of land. Higher density development can also be achieved through rezoning which would consider development proposals on a case-by-case basis. Density may be slightly increased if Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) credits are implemented.

Existing Rural Neighborhood Node

The current Future Land Use Map contains a Rural Neighborhood Node at the intersection of Lebanon Road and Efland-Cedar Grove Road. Rural Neighborhood Nodes are intended for small-scale commercial uses characteristic of "Mom and Pop" convenience stores and gas stations. The Rural Neighborhood Node is outside of Orange County's water and sewer Primary Service Area as per the WSMPBA. Given the proximity of this Node (less than 2 miles) from the core Efland area where services intended to be offered in a rural neighborhood node are available, it is recommended that the Rural Neighborhood Node at this location be removed from the Future Land Use map.

C. Transportation

Objective: Provision of an efficient, multi-modal transportation system.

The vehicular transportation system in the planning area generally functions well, but there are some concerns, especially regarding motorized vehicle flows during peak traffic hours. However, some peak hour congestion is also to be expected in an urban or suburban area. The key is managing the transportation system such that it can function as safely and efficiently as possible. Additional concerns regarding the transportation system include pedestrian and bicyclist safety and the general deficiency in the walkability/bikeability of the planning area, connectivity to the Interstate for tractor-trailer traffic, and the idea that the current transportation system encourages single-occupancy vehicle use while discouraging bicycling and walking.

Of particular concern in Efland is the volume of traffic occurring on Efland-Cedar Grove Road/Forrest Avenue/Mount Willing Road during peak hours as people make their way to and from Interstate 40/85. The fact that there is an at-grade train crossing on this route creates an even larger concern as trains passing through the area create a backup of 50 to 100 cars during "rush hours." This also creates a safety concern as emergency vehicles cannot navigate this essential route when trains pass through. Additionally, two roughly 90-degree turns are part of this high-volume route.

Sidewalks do not exist anywhere in the planning area and it was only very recently that Highway 70 was widened enough to accommodate bicycles along the route. Broadening transportation alternatives beyond the passenger car is important. “Alternative” transportation modes such as pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit are part of an intermodal transportation system. The following are recommendations pertaining to transportation:

1. Road volumes and capacities on Brookhollow, Richmond, and Efland-Cedar Grove Roads need to be further studied before significant additional development that will utilize these roads is allowed. Improvements to these roads may be necessary to efficiently accommodate growing traffic volumes.
2. The Efland-Cedar Grove/Forrest Avenue/Mt. Willing road corridor should be realigned. A vehicular underpass under the railroad should be considered and the at-grade crossing should be eliminated if an alternative is implemented. (See Map 28 for possible alignment). Additionally, an alternative to a traffic signal should be considered to efficiently manage traffic; specifically, traffic circles should be considered to more effectively move peak hour traffic through this area. Route re-alignment should also endeavor to maintain community connectivity between areas south of the railroad track and the core area of Efland. If an underpass proves not to be feasible, then the county should work with NCDOT for a solution to more effectively route traffic through this area.
3. A connection from Highway 70 east to the Interstate connector should be identified and constructed (i.e., eastbound Highway 70 to southbound connector to Interstate which could reduce traffic volumes on Mt. Willing Road and Forrest Avenue). Mitigation measures to address any identified adverse impacts due to constructing the connection would also need to be implemented.
4. A park-n-ride lot should be located in the planning area. The exact location should be determined in conjunction with transportation planning professionals and an advisory committee but a location near the Interstate and walkable to the Efland village core should be considered. (See Map 28 for the general location of the Efland village core).
5. Bicycle lanes should be provided along all major roadways. Major roadways in the planning area include Brookhollow Road, Efland-Cedar Grove Road, Richmond Road, Frazier Road, Buckhorn Road, Lebanon Road, Forrest Avenue, Mt. Willing Road, West Ten Road, Bowman Road, and Ben Wilson Road.
6. Sidewalks are necessary for safe pedestrian travel. Sidewalks should be required in new developments and a sidewalk plan to retrofit developed areas so that sidewalks can serve as connectors between residential, commercial, and civic uses should be completed and implemented along with mechanism for handling liability and maintenance of the sidewalks. Constructing a sidewalk along Highway 70 from Tinnen Road to Lloyd Dairy Road should be a priority. Additionally, sidewalk and/or trail privileges should be

secured when sewer right-of-way is acquired so that an additional acquisition is not necessary in the future.

7. A streetscape plan should also be developed in conjunction with the sidewalks program. Trees are needed for shade along sidewalks and landscaping for aesthetic purposes should also be incorporated into the streetscape.
8. The ability to have a commuter train station in the future should be preserved, preferably within the vicinity of the Efland village core near Mt. Willing Road or Efland-Cedar Grove Road Extension. A station could serve the existing Amtrak service or a station could be incorporated into the proposed Triangle commuter rail system.
9. The county should work cooperatively with Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) to provide bus service in the area.
10. Mace Road should be planned to connect through to Lebanon Road.
11. An Interstate pedestrian overpass should be planned in the future to connect areas north of Interstate 40/85 with Gravelly Hill Middle School and West Ten Soccer Park.
12. A Buckhorn Road Access Management Plan should be explored.

D. Housing

Objective: Provision of a mix of housing choices that includes decent, affordable housing for “the workforce.”

Housing affordability is a significant issue throughout the nation, including within the Triangle region and Orange County. Housing prices in Orange County are notably higher than within other areas of the Triangle. Historically, Cheeks Township has enjoyed somewhat lower prices than much of the county, but prices of the homes in the newer subdivisions within the planning area are still higher than many people working in Orange County can afford to pay. Working towards ensuring the provision of housing opportunities affordable to a broad spectrum of citizens should be a priority for Orange County. The following are recommendations pertaining to housing issues:

1. Residential development that is consistent with the character, size, scale, and price range of existing surrounding homes should be encouraged. Since home prices are directly tied to the square footage of the home, Orange County should consider offering incentives such as expedited review or density bonuses for developments that offer smaller sized homes.
2. Orange County should consider adopting a policy requiring that a certain percentage of new homes within a subdivision be affordable and under the control of an organization

such as the Orange Community Housing and Land Trust (OCHLT) or Habitat for Humanity to ensure affordability in perpetuity.

3. Examine strategies to preserve affordability through preservation of existing neighborhoods.

E. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Objective: Provision of adequate parks and recreation opportunities and open space preservation.

Existing recreation facilities, both public and private, serve the planning area fairly well. Desire has been expressed for a trail system in the area, including pedestrian/bicycle access to Seven Mile Creek Preserve from the planning area when the preserve is opened for public use in the future. Additionally, the desire for neighborhood “pocket parks” has been expressed. Recommendations regarding parks, recreation, and open space are as follows:

1. The planning area should include small neighborhood parks with playgrounds to augment Efland-Cheeks Park & Community Center and private facilities. A possible means to achieve neighborhood parks and provide in-town recreation alternatives and community destinations is to require their dedication when new residential development is approved. Alternatively, as part of the required open space in a new residential development, developers could be required to provide a small park within new subdivisions that a Homeowner’s Association would maintain. However, private parks would be available only to residents of the particular subdivision in which they are located.
2. A trail system along McGowan Creek should be planned and implemented. The trail might have to cross the creek in several locations due to the proximity of existing homes near the creek but this could be accomplished using pedestrian bridges. The following recommendations are made to encourage trail development:
 - Indemnification of the landowner from lawsuits
 - Provision of a small tax incentive for the landowner
 - Prohibition of motorized vehicles on the trail
 - Assurances that local government will maintain the trail
3. A greenway along the Eno River, east of the planning area, has been proposed. If the greenway is implemented, any future trail/greenway along McGowan Creek should tie in to the planned Eno River greenway.
4. When the planned Seven Mile Creek Nature Preserve opens for regular public use, a pedestrian/bicycle connection from the planning area should be provided to the Preserve. Planning for such a connection should occur as part of the planning process for the Preserve.

5. Open space should continue to be required as part of the land development approval process.
6. Additional space may be needed in the next few years in the community center at Efland-Cheeks Park. Space needs should be monitored so that monies for expansion can be included in the county's Capital Facilities budget when additional space becomes necessary.
7. The county should consider including a branch library at the Efland-Cheeks Park & Community Center.

F. Communications

Objective: Provision of a high-quality communications system that will meet the needs of business, industry, and residents.

Communication systems are an important aspect of attracting commercial uses to appropriate sections of the planning area. Factors such as wireless communication, high-speed internet access, and state-of-the-art communication infrastructure are analyzed by businesses and residents considering locating in a given area.

Technology is changing at an ever-increasing rate and keeping abreast of changes can be essential to staying competitive. In emergency situations, functioning communication systems can literally be the difference between life and death. Within the planning area, cellular phone coverage is currently sufficient. However, there are areas adjacent to the planning area that lack proper coverage. Given the nature of communication systems, some of the following recommendations extend outside of the planning area and are recommendations regarding a countywide policy to improve access to communication technology.

1. Achieving full cellular wireless coverage countywide should be a priority. A Telecommunications Plan that will achieve this objective should be developed and implemented. In order to minimize the number of free-standing towers necessary for antennas, the county should work with the power companies to allow wireless communication antennas on existing transmission line structures.
2. DSL and/or cable Internet service is needed, at a minimum, in areas targeted for growth. These services are particularly vital for commercial or industrial uses although providing these services to residential uses should also be considered. The county should work with the providers of these services to ensure that necessary infrastructure is extended to growth areas.
3. The county should consider asking providers of wireless communication services to install generator backup instead of battery backup at cellular switch sites. During

prolonged power outages, the battery backups are depleted and the wireless communication system stops functioning.

G. Intergovernmental Issues

Objective: A greater level of intergovernmental coordination between Orange County and the other governmental entities in the planning area.

Planning coordination with the City of Mebane has become increasingly important as the City of Mebane continues to grow within Orange County. Intergovernmental coordination is becoming increasingly important so that growth can be planned for in an orderly method and services can be provided in a timely manner. Growth of the city affects Orange County as the county is responsible for providing certain services for residents within the county, regardless of whether they reside within municipal limits. For example, children who live in the city's limits but within Orange County attend Orange County public schools, which are a major funding item within the county's budget. Social services such as health services provided through the county's Health Department and senior services provided through the Department on Aging are available to residents of municipal areas within Orange County. Rapid population growth can have significant fiscal impacts for the county.

Additionally, Orange County is a leader in the state on preserving the quality of the environment. Great care is taken to ensure new development has the least possible impact on the environment. There is concern within the county that rampant growth within municipal limits will adversely affect the environment and have negative impacts throughout the county.

Some residents in the planning area have expressed concern over the potential of their homes and land being annexed against their wishes by a municipal government. In past years, some residents have discussed the possibility of incorporating the community of Efland to better ensure self-governance in the future. However, incorporation is only one solution to possible annexation. Another possible solution would be to establish a growth boundary agreement with the City of Mebane. Such an agreement could ease resident's concerns about annexation and provide a more solid basis for all entities in the area regarding future planning.

Orange-Alamance Water System (OAWS) is also a significant quasi-governmental entity in the planning area. The presence of a water delivery system is one of the major factors influencing growth and the nature and form of growth. Coordination among the entities providing public services in the planning area is essential to guiding the future of the area.

The following are recommendations regarding intergovernmental issues:

1. As was discussed in the Water and Sewer portion of this section, the City of Mebane and OAWS should be invited to become signatories to the Water and Sewer Management and Planning Boundary Agreement (WSMPBA). During this process, foreseeable limits to water and sewer services would be defined and agreed to by all parties. The Towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough and OWASA (Orange Water and Sewer