

I. Introduction

In April 1991, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved a Study of the Efland Area. The Study analyzed the defined area and made recommendations regarding Housing, Community Services, Transportation, Open Space, and Land Use and Economic Planning.

In 2004, discussions regarding the need for an updated Efland area plan occurred within County government. Significant residential growth was occurring in this portion of the county, especially within the City of Mebane; a new Middle School was slated for construction within the Buckhorn Economic Development District (EDD) and the City of Mebane and Orange County had entered into an Interlocal Agreement to extend the City's water and sewer lines to the Middle School site; and the planned extension of the Efland sewer system was becoming imminent. The proximity of the Efland area to Interstate 40/85 and between the "Triangle" and "Triad" regions of the State coupled with the availability and potential expansion of public water and sewer systems provides the area with a unique potential for growth not seen in other areas of Orange County's Planning jurisdiction.

As a result of the discussions, the BOCC approved the formation of a citizen Task Force in December 2004 to work with Planning Staff in developing a plan for the area defined by the BOCC. The 2004 defined planning area is significantly larger than the area considered in the 1991 study (See Map 1). Prior to Task Force formation, the general scope of Task Force responsibilities was defined as follows:

The general mission of the Task Force is to evaluate the existing Land Use Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, as it pertains to the Efland/Mebane area, and offer local perspective on whether the existing Land Use Element Map categories of: 10-Year Transition, Residential; 20-Year Transition, Residential; Economic Development District; Commercial/Industrial Activity Node; Resource Protection Areas; and roadways are adequate in size, density, intensity, scale, or location to address changes that are occurring in the area.

A Task Force of 12 citizens, primarily people who live in the study area, was appointed by the BOCC. Additionally, the City of Mebane was invited to appoint representatives to the Task Force since Intergovernmental coordination would be essential given that the planning area abuts Mebane's city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Two City of Mebane representatives served on the Task Force. A member of Orange County's BOCC also served on the Task Force. After formation of the Task Force, members subsequently adopted the following Mission Statement:

MISSION STATEMENT

The Efland/Mebane Small Area Plan Task Force is charged with developing a small area plan for the defined Efland/Mebane area (as is shown in Map 1). A small area plan provides specific planning and design proposals for a defined geographic area. Small

area plans are generally prepared when there are changing conditions in an area or when defined issues in a specific area need to be addressed.

The Efland/Mebane Small Area Plan Task Force will address the following issues:

- Have the goals and objectives included in the 1991 Study been met?
- Is the pattern for development set forth by the existing Land Use Element Map relevant today?
- Since 1991, have there been significant changes to community character and form?
- What changes need to be made to the goals and objectives?
- Is there demand for additional infrastructure in the study area? (With particular consideration in respect to sewerage issues)
- Do Transition Areas need to be expanded, contracted, or moved?
- Are locations for economic development appropriate?
- What is the development potential of existing Transition Areas?
- Which areas of the study area are most suitable for development?
- Are there areas appropriate for higher density/intensity of residential development?
- What role may Mebane play in the future of the study area?

Recommendations made by the Task Force will be incorporated into a final report to be prepared by the Orange County Planning Staff, reviewed by the Task Force, and forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners. Recommendations, where appropriate, will be incorporated into the Draft Orange County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element, Orange County Zoning Atlas and/or text, and Orange County Subdivision Regulations.

The area within the 2004 Small Area Plan Boundary depicted in Map 1 is referred to as the “planning area” throughout this document. The planning area is comprised of approximately 7,490 acres.

This Plan is the result of a series of twelve (12) Task Force meetings that occurred throughout 2005 and 2006 and a Community Meeting that was held in March 2006.

