

II. Previous Plans

1981 Orange County Land Use Plan (Renamed Land Use Element in 1988)

The Board of County Commissioners officially adopted the Land Use Plan in September 1981. Although the Plan is almost 25-years old, the basic themes and concepts of the plan are retained and adhered to by the County. These premises include watershed protection, focusing commercial/industrial development to nodes at strategic transportation intersections, and requiring zoning to be consistent with the Plan.

Since 1981, minor amendments to the Land Use Plan occurred. One of the more significant changes was approved in April 1988. The County moved towards a Comprehensive Plan model that breaks major topic areas out into various “Elements.” As a result, the Land Use Plan was renamed the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. When this change was made in 1988, the following Elements were to comprise the Comprehensive Plan:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Open Space
- Recreation
- Economic Development
- Services and Facilities
- and additional Elements as Required

The Land Use Element contains typical planning analysis of existing conditions related to demographics, building activity and trends, development constraints, land use and infrastructure, and goals, objectives, and policies. A county-wide Future Land Use Map is the result of the analyses. In addition, each of the seven Townships located in the county is covered in a Township Plan.

The Efland area is situated in Cheeks Township, which is located in the west-central portion of Orange County. The Comprehensive Plan advocated the following proposals for Cheeks Township:

- Medium and higher intensity commercial development that would be most appropriately served by a centralized water and sewer system should be located within the U.S. 70/I-85 corridor from the Efland community to the extraterritorial planning jurisdiction of Mebane.
- Low and medium intensity commercial, industrial, and residential development which would create minimal negative impacts on the Upper Eno water supply watershed should be located in Efland’s Transition Areas in proximity to the designated activity nodes.
- The undeveloped areas south of McGowan Creek and south of the I-85 corridor are suitable for medium and higher intensity residential, commercial, and industrial development toward the end of the plan period.

- The area of the Township that contains the Upper Eno water supply watershed, the Back Creek water supply watershed, and the Cane Creek water supply watershed should be afforded the protection necessary to minimize adverse development impacts.

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan designated five (5) activity nodes in Cheeks Township. The activity nodes are:

- Efland Center (Commercial-Industrial Transition). Focused on the intersection of Southern Drive and Mr. Willing Road.
- Miles North (Commercial-Industrial Transition). Located at the intersection of US 70 and Buckhorn Road.
- Miles South (Commercial-Industrial Transition). Located at the intersection of I-85 and Buckhorn Road.
- Fairfield (Rural Neighborhood). Located at the intersection of Lebanon Road and Efland-Cedar Grove Road.
- I-85/Buckhorn (Economic Development). Located at I-85, Buckhorn Road, and US 70.

These activity nodes are indicated on the current Future Land Use map on page 51.

In 1999, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a goal to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan beginning with the update of the Land Use Element. Extensive data collection, research, trends analysis, and community outreach for the Land Use Element was initiated in 2000 and is continuing.

1991 Efland Area Study

In response to citizen concerns regarding the protection of the character of Efland, Orange County Planning staff completed a study of the Efland area in conjunction with a Citizens' Steering Committee in January 1991. The Orange County Board of Commissioners approved the study in April 1991. Part of the study's purpose was to define the boundaries of Efland. A survey of area residents was completed and a map of the general boundaries was included in the study.

The Study included a Profile of the area which incorporated natural environmental features, historic and cultural sites of significance, existing land use and zoning, and demographic and employment data. The study also enumerated Community Infrastructure and Systems (Transportation; Utilities; and Recreation, Parks, and Open Space) and described the Community Character and Form. Recommendations regarding Housing, Community Services, Transportation, Open Space, and Land Use and Economic Planning were made. Appendix A of this plan contains the status of recommendations made in the 1991 Efland Area Study.