



LAND USE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

LU-1 Encourage a development pattern that is consistent with the Small Area Plan and Future Land Use Map.

- **Strategy LU-1.A Base zoning decisions on consistency with this plan and require development design to adhere to recommendations for the applicable future land use character areas.**

- ▶ Regularly reference this plan in consistency statements in support of or as reason for denial for zoning decisions in the Cullowhee Planning Area.

- **Strategy LU-1.B Regularly update the Future Land Use Map.**

- ▶ Amend the Future Land Use Map to reflect rezonings that are not consistent with the plan.

- ▶ Consider an update of the Future Land Use Map and other relevant policy recommendations in the plan every 5 years or as significant changes occur that will influence land uses.

LU-2 Improve the design of new housing development to reduce conflict and improve compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

- **Strategy LU-2.A • Protect the character of existing neighborhoods near campus and in potential growth areas.**

- ▶ Encourage only compatible housing types and lower densities within established single family residential areas, particularly those designated as Neighborhood Preservation Areas on the Future Land Use Map.

- **Strategy LU-2.B • Encourage high quality student housing that complements existing neighborhoods.**

- ▶ Improve design standards that could help increase the compatibility of new medium- to high-density residential, especially in Transitional areas include:

SIDEWALKS, SHADE TREES AND ACCESS TO TRAILS, GREENWAYS AND OPEN SPACE WAS CONSIDERED VERY IMPORTANT BY OVER 60% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

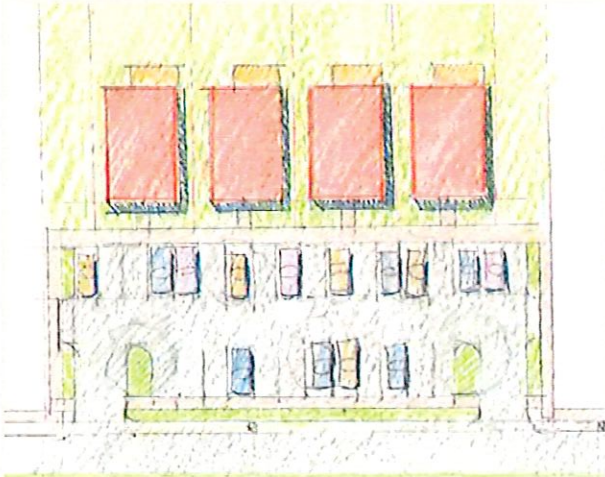
ACCORDING TO THE CULLOWHEE SMALL AREA PLAN SURVEY

- Improve landscaping and buffer requirements that encourage tree preservation, native trees, wider buffers, and layered planting schemes.
- Increase minimum standards and prioritize features for open space and amenities. Require usable open space and protection of natural features.
- Minimize visual impact of parking lots through design standards and/or incentives.
 - Limit parking in front of residences to one (1) parking bay deep
 - Provide a 10% reduction in parking minimums if located behind buildings
 - Encourage distributed parking (require planting islands for every 10 spaces or 100 linear feet of parking).

• **Strategy LU-2.C Evaluate current approval processes in the Cullowhee Planning Area to increase community dialog and improve design of new development.**

SITE DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

Site layout, including the arrangement of buildings and parking lot design can have a tremendous affect on the visual impact of new development. Recent student housing off-campus have been designed with minimal amounts of open space reservation and large parking lots in front of homes and small-format apartments. This is an efficient way to provide the parking that is currently required but it results in the site resembling a commercial development. Improving open space requirements, breaking up parking lots and adding additional landscaping and shade trees can make student housing, even multi-plexes appear more like single family neighborhoods. This type of site design can make housing more attractive and appeal to a broader demographic.



Typical layout of new student housing includes a large parking lot in front of the residences.



An alternative layout includes residences that front on a shared greenspace and distributed parking with canopy trees.



LU-3 Encourage market-rate housing that is designed to appeal to a broad demographic including student, graduate students and non-students.

• **Strategy LU-3.A Encourage a greater mix of housing types close to the WCU campus, major roadways and transit.**

- ▶ Encourage or require a mix of housing types in Transitional and Multi-Family Residential areas, especially as part of Planned Developments.
- ▶ Housing types including single-family homes, patio homes, townhomes, quadplexes and duplexes should be allowed in areas with greater access to campus and transportation infrastructure.
- ▶ Consider allowing single-family homes with smaller lot widths and setbacks in appropriate zoning districts to encourage these housing types.
 - Smaller lot homes may be appropriate in Low and Medium Multi-Family Residential zoning districts as well as via Planned Developments with increased design requirements.
 - Currently lot width minimums for single-family homes in Multi-family Medium (MFM) and Multi-family Low (MFL) zoning districts are 50 feet, front setbacks are 20-35 feet and side setbacks are 15-25 feet. Narrower



Pocket neighborhoods such as the above image with 35ft lots facing a shared greenspace was among the housing types most preferred in the visual preference activity conducted during the Cullowhee Small Area Plan public meetings. This type of housing could appeal to broad demographic including graduate students, WCU staff and retirees if they are appropriately designed. Currently lot widths under 50ft are prohibited except in Planned Developments.

lots are allowed only in Planned Developments. This could be a disincentive to single-family homes.

- Narrower lot widths and smaller setbacks could be allowed as a by-right use for some districts if primary vehicular access is off of main roads, units are alley-loaded (accessed from the rear of property) and accessible community open space is provided.
- ▶ Apartments, condos and other larger scale multi-family should be limited to Campus Edge areas, Commercial areas, the River District and Multi-family Residential areas.

- **Strategy LU-3.B Coordinate with Jackson County Departments, area non-profits and nearby municipalities to encourage workforce housing.**

- ▶ Coordinate with developers and encourage policies and programs at the County level that incentivize non-student housing.
 - Policies, programs and incentives should encourage new housing types that appeal to seniors, grad students, faculty and young families

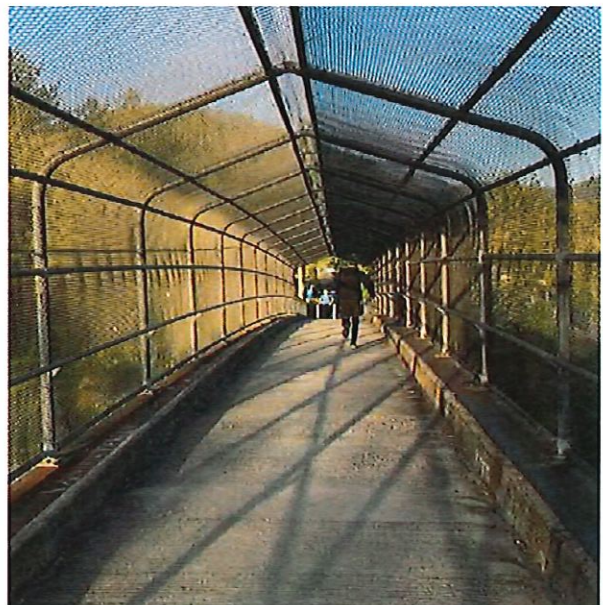
LU-4 Encourage a walkable campus edge.

- **Strategy LU-4.A Focus higher density student housing in areas within walking distance to campus**

- ▶ Focus higher density student housing along primary pedestrian corridors (existing & planned)
- ▶ Areas on the Future Land Use Map designated as Campus Edge and the River District are candidate locations

- **Strategy LU-4.B Implement site design and scale policies to encourage walkable, pedestrian-oriented development near campus gateways and existing or future connections to Western Carolina University**

- ▶ Consider modifications to the Multi-family Residential Zoning District (MFH), other districts and/or the creation of a new zoning district that could include:
 - Additional architectural standards, i.e. increases in percentage of transparency



Student housing should be focused around key pedestrian connections to campus such as the pedestrian overpass at NC 107 and Little Savannah Rd



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Action Plan

This plan document is meant to guide policies and decision making in order to advance the vision and goals for the Cullowhee area documented in Chapter 3 of this plan. The following is a list of preliminary implementation steps that address priority issues identified during the planning process.

1. Jackson County Unified Development Ordinance Updates

- a. **Revise regulations to allow for single-family homes with smaller lot widths and setbacks in Low and Medium Multi-Family Residential zoning districts with increased design requirements including internal access.**
 - *Currently new single-family lots must have a minimum width of 50ft except for those in a Planned Development. Allowing narrower lots in certain locations may help encourage more housing that appeals to*
- b. **Improve design standards that could help increase the compatibility of new medium- to high-density residential, especially in Transitional areas.**
 - *Improve landscaping and buffer requirements that encourage tree preservation, native trees, wider buffers, and layered planting schemes.*
 - *Increase minimum standards and prioritize features for open space and amenities. Require usable open space and protection of natural features.*
 - *Minimize visual impact of parking lots through design standards and/or incentives.*

Measures of Success

Tracking implementation of the Cullowhee Small Area Plan should be a priority. The Cullowhee Planning Council and Jackson County staff should evaluate progress toward these action items and the goals of the plan on an annual basis. Quantitative statistics and a qualitative discussion of progress on 1.a and 1.b should include:

- Number of new single-family homes approved
- Neighbor input on proposed residential projects
- Amount of open space in new residential development

c. Revise the existing Commercial district to create a more walkable mixed use district or the create a new River District zoning category to encourage the type of new development envisioned in the Old Cullowhee Design Concept.

- *This could be implemented through modifying an existing district, creating a new district or an overlay district. Reducing the required setback, increasing maximum height of buildings and requiring parking in the rear of structures are priorities. Recommendations for modifications and/or a new district are included on page 46.*

d. Encourage a more walkable campus edge through modifications to the Multifamily Residential Zoning District (MFH), other districts and/or the creation of a new zoning district.

- *Architectural standards and other design requirements may be implemented in exchange for reductions in parking. Recommendations for modifications and/or a new district are included on page 45.*

e. Review parking requirements in each of the districts in the Cullowhee Planning Area.

- *This could be done on a few key districts initially. Provisions for private parking in new development should be coordinated with pedestrian access improvements on the edges of campus and on-campus parking infrastructure and policies.*

f. Consider the development of regulations for multi-family development outside of regulated districts.

2. Greenways and Pedestrian Connections

a. Extend the Tuckasegee Greenway

- *See page 50 for detailed segments and phasing recommendations.*

b. Study the feasibility of the Multi-use Path parallel to NC 107 between Country Club Rd and Cullowhee School

- *Coordinate with the Southwestern RPO to score and prioritize this project*
- *Study potential funding sources include RTP Funds, due to transportation component*

Measures of Success

Tracking implementation of the Cullowhee Small Area Plan should be a priority. The Cullowhee Planning Council and Jackson County staff should evaluate progress toward these action items and the goals of the plan on an annual basis. Quantitative statistics and a qualitative discussion of progress on 1.c-e and 2a-c should include:

- Building permits and redevelopment in Old Cullowhee
- Number of percentage of new multi-family units located with walk access to campus
- Mode split and trends for commuters and students to and from the WCU campus
- Linear feet of available right-of-way for the Tuckasegee Greenway
- Linear feet of greenway and multi-use paths in the Cullowhee Area