

**City of Greensboro Planning Department
Generalized Future Land Use Map Plan Amendment
June 18, 2008 Public Hearing**

The information provided in this staff report has been included for the purpose of reviewing proposed amendments to the Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Plan Amendments not in association with rezoning cases are heard by the Planning Board, and recommended to the City Council for final action.

Case Number: CP-08-13

Request: To amend the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Figure 4-2) of the Greensboro Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan for properties located adjacent and in close proximity to the west side of Battleground Avenue between Albright Drive and Carroll Street, from the Mixed Use Commercial Land Use Classification to the Low Residential Land Use Classification.

Location: Properties adjacent and in close proximity to the west side of Battleground Avenue between Albright Drive and Carroll Street

Size: Approximately 16.78 acres

Existing Land Use: Numerous single family detached dwellings

CONNECTIONS 2025 LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

Existing:

Mixed Use Commercial - This designation is intended to promote a mix of uses, of which various commercial uses remain predominant, but where residential, service, and other uses are complementary. Where applied to older highway corridors characterized by "strip" commercial uses, the intent is to encourage infill and redevelopment for a more diverse and attractive mix of uses over time. Examples include residential units over commercial uses or a wider array of economically viable uses to replace obsolete uses. Such areas also may represent opportunities for the introduction of substantial higher density and/or mixed-income housing, with negligible impacts on, or resistance from, nearby single-family neighborhoods. Ensuring that buildings are of the appropriate scale and intensity is critical, as is ensuring that sites are designed in a coordinated, as opposed to a lot-by-lot, manner. New "strip" commercial development is discouraged.

Proposed:

Low Residential (3-5 dwelling units/acre) - This category includes the City's predominantly single-family neighborhoods as well as other compatible housing types that can be accommodated within this density range. Although there are some existing residential areas in the City developed on lots greater than 1/3 acre, future residential developments and "conventional" subdivisions should generally maintain a gross density of no less than three dwellings per acre, except where environmental constraints (e.g., the Watershed Critical Area)

prevent such densities from being achieved. Compact developments that include clustered, small lots with substantial retained open space are encouraged.

CONNECTIONS 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

The following policies are applicable in this case:

Reinvestment/Infill Goal: Promote sound investment in Greensboro’s urban areas, including Center City, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods.

POLICY 4C: Promote new patterns and intensities of use to increase economic competitiveness and enhance quality of life in urban areas.

Housing and Neighborhoods Goal: Meet the needs of present and future Greensboro citizens for a choice of decent, affordable housing in stable, livable neighborhoods that offer security, quality of life, and the necessary array of services and facilities.

POLICY 6A.2: Promote mixed-income neighborhoods.

POLICY 6A.4: Implement measures to protect neighborhoods from potential negative impacts of development, redevelopment, and/or public projects that are inconsistent with the neighborhood’s livability, architectural or historical character, and reinvestment potential.

- Including protection against incompatible commercial encroachments into residential neighborhoods

POLICY 6C: Promote the diversification of new housing stock to meet the needs of all citizens for suitable, affordable housing.

Economic Development Goal: Promote a healthy, diversified economy with a strong tax base and opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and for-profit and non-profit economic development for all segments of the community, including under-served areas such as East Greensboro.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT HISTORY		
Case #	Date	Request Summary
07-43	N/A	A request to amend approximately .31 acres of the Generalized Future Land Use Map for property located in the northeast corner of the block within Lawndale Drive, Rosecrest Drive, Fairfield Avenue and West Cornwallis Drive was withdrawn prior to consideration by City Council.
08-02	03/18/08	A request to amend approximately 25.73 acres of the Generalized Future Land Use Map for property located adjacent and in close proximity to Lawndale Drive, between West Cornwallis Drive and the north side of Colonial Avenue, was approved by City Council.

APPLICANT STATED REASONS FOR REQUEST

Explain in detail why the change is needed and a justification for such a change:

The Guilford Hills neighborhood feels the City's adopted Generalized Future Land Use Map needs to be changed in the proposed areas to prevent incompatible commercial encroachment into the neighborhood.

Explain in detail the conditions that you think may warrant a Plan Amendment (i.e. unforeseen circumstances or the emergence of new information, unanticipated changes in development pattern, rezonings, transportation improvements, economic opportunities, changes in socioeconomic conditions, etc.):

Recent rezoning requests in and near the neighborhood, including an office request and a Walgreens commercial request on Cornwallis Drive are of concern to Guilford Hills, particularly since the future land use classification identified in this request encourages more of this type of development. Additional requests to encourage more commercial uses into the neighborhood are not desired.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Need for the Proposed Change:

The Guilford Hills neighborhood has requested a change in the future land use designation for a number of properties adjacent or in close proximity to the west side of Battleground Avenue, between Albright Drive and Carroll Street. Areas to the north and east of the request are currently designated as Mixed Use Commercial and areas to the west and south are primarily designated Low Residential, with a small area designated Mixed Use Residential to the southwest. Areas designated Moderate Residential and Low Residential are located further to the east (other side of Battleground Avenue and Lawndale Drive) and areas further to the south are designated Institutional and Mixed Use Commercial.

The proposed change in land use designation is based on concern from the Guilford Hills neighborhood that the current Mixed Use Commercial designation for these properties will encourage new commercial investment that would be incompatible with the established residential pattern in this area. Several controversial rezoning requests in this area of Greensboro, encouraged in part due to the current Mixed Use Commercial designations on the Generalized Future Land Use Map, have been noted as reason for the requested change.

This request is similar to a request from the Kirkwood neighborhood approved by City Council in March 2008 for properties east of Battleground Avenue and Lawndale Drive. In both cases future land use designations, developed at the broader citywide scale, were seen as conflicting with the long term development desires of these residential areas and the need to determine the most appropriate relationship between higher intensity commercial uses and lower intensity residential uses. However the current request from Guilford Hills is different in that the requested properties are physically separated from Battleground Avenue via vegetated buffers within City of Greensboro rights-of-way or by adjoining uses. Additionally, affected residential lots are oriented towards side streets rather than the major thoroughfare of Battleground Avenue. Areas in this request have also been zoned for low residential uses for a long time and contain existing, occupied residential structures. Given this pattern, much of which is anticipated to remain as residential in the future, a change in land use designation to Low Residential makes sense.

The Comprehensive Plan notes policies and goals that encourage both a healthy economic environment and stable neighborhoods. The Plan also encourages reinvestment and infill development in previously developed areas but stresses the need for such development to be compatible with surrounding uses and to limit negative consequences from incompatible commercial encroachments into established residential areas.

Overall staff feels the requested change to the future land use map is reasonable and would reflect current and anticipated development trends for this area in the future while limiting the potential for incompatible commercial encroachment into a well established residential area. Staff does note however that some adjustments to the proposed request may be appropriate based on additional information provided from both the neighborhood and affected property owners following the initial application. Of particular note are residential (zoned and use) properties at the northern edge of the request (around Carroll and Walter Streets) where recent development trends have facilitated the conversion of existing residential lots to primarily smaller scale, medical and dental office uses. Properties in this area are physically separated from the main Guilford Hills neighborhood and are in more of a mixed use environment than other areas with this request. This trend, if limited in size and scale, could be compatible with the nearby residential neighborhood and thus not need a change in land use designation. While properties in closest proximity to Battleground Avenue might also have potential for conversion to commercial use, the presence of a significant tree buffer in City of Greensboro rights-of-way between these properties and Battleground Avenue, and the orientation of these lots towards side streets, support change to the Low Residential classification. As noted in previous cases the City's adopted policies allow the development of more neighborhood oriented commercial and service uses within areas designated as residential if limited to certain zoning districts or size. This allows the opportunity for limited non-residential uses that are both compatible with larger residential areas and provide useful services to these areas.

Effect of the proposed Change on the Need for City Services and Facilities:

None anticipated as the change in designation would support existing, established uses.

Implications, if any, the Amendment may have for Other Parts of the Plan:

This request is in some ways a continuation of the previously successful request to clarify appropriate future development in areas adjacent to the Battleground Avenue and Lawndale Drive corridors where low intensity residential uses are in close proximity to higher intensity commercial uses. Additional requests in this or other areas with similar concerns may be anticipated if this request is approved.

Unforeseen Circumstances or the Emergence of New Information (e.g. significant economic opportunity in Tier 2 or 3):

The Generalized Future Land Use Map of the City's Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan was designed to depict anticipated land use trends at a broad scale. As such adjustments to the edges of areas with specific land use classifications may be appropriate to clarify stable or anticipated land development trends for the future. The clarification of appropriate development patterns along the Battleground Avenue corridor could be considered one such change.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department recommends approval of the requested amendment. It should be noted that City Council has the authority to reduce the size of the original request to better define the relationship between residential and commercial uses in this area and staff and Planning Board may make recommendations to that effect if desired.