

**City of Greensboro Planning Department
Generalized Future Land Use Map Plan Amendment
May 21, 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-08-12

Request: To amend the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Figure 4-2) of the Greensboro Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan for properties located in the southwest quadrant of NC 68 and Leabourne Road, from the Interim Corporate/Business Park Land Use Classification to the Mixed Use Commercial Land Use Classification.

Location: southwest quadrant of NC 68 and Leabourne Road

Size: approximately 69.45 acres

Existing Land Use: agriculture and rural residential

CONNECTIONS 2025 LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

Existing:

Interim Corporate/Business Park - Areas that predominantly consist of office, flex office, technology research and development, light manufacturing, distribution and other similar uses on larger sites, with much of it, in a planned business park setting that emphasizes natural characteristics and landscaping. The area may also contain supportive uses such as retail, hotel, restaurant, and residential development which customarily locate within planned employment centers. The supportive uses should make up less than half of the total area of the development. Developments should be designed to promote compatibility with adjacent uses.

Proposed:

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.

CONNECTIONS 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

The following policies are applicable in this case:

Growth at the Fringe Goal: Provide a development framework for the fringe that guides sound, sustainable patterns of land use, limits sprawl, protects rural character, evidences sound stewardship of the environment, and provides for efficient provision of public services and facilities as the City expands. Development will increase density and mix land uses at a pedestrian scale with sidewalks, bikeways, and where possible, public transit.

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 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.

POLICY 7C: Ensure that city land use policies and regulations allow for an adequate supply of land to accommodate economic development.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT HISTORY

Case #	Date	Request Summary
CP-07-46	12/18/07	A request to amend the Comprehensive Plan from Interim Residential to Institutional for the northwest quadrant of NC 68 and Leabourne Road 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:

This site is situated directly south of the future GTCC campus and directly across from the future US 220 connector, making it ideal for a horizontal mixed use site for a combination of retail and multifamily uses to support GTCC students and staff. The City's Connection 2025 Comprehensive Plan supports mixed use nodes focused in the vicinity of local access interchanges at major roadway intersections. Additionally the Guilford County Airport Area Plan designates this area as Mixed Use.

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.):

The current future land use classification for this site is an "interim" designation and as this area is being developed and new information emerges, it is clear that this intersection should be a mixed use node. Planning improvements in this area including the planned US 220 connector and NC 68 intersection, recent approvals for the new GTCC campus and the County's Airport Area Plan designation as Mixed Use support this proposed change

STAFF ANALYSIS

Need for the Proposed Change:

The applicant has requested a change to the Generalized Future Land Use Map from Interim Corporate/Business Park to Mixed Use Commercial to facilitate the development of retail and multi-family uses. Areas designated Interim Residential and Institutional (future GTCC campus) are located to the north and west of this site with areas designated Interim Corporate/Business Park located to the south and east. Areas designated as Mixed Use Corporate Park, Node of Mixed Use and Mixed Use Commercial are located further to the south and east respectively.

This site's Interim Corporate/Business Park classification was established in June 2007 with the assignment of interim land use classifications to all new areas covered by the City's revised Water-Sewer extension policy. The site's designation was based in part on its close proximity to Piedmont Triad International Airport, the presence of key transportation infrastructure including NC 68 (connecting to I-40) and the eventual US 220 connector and the presence of a number of large, primarily undeveloped parcels. The new GTCC campus in this area also supports the current designation as workers trained on this campus could access new jobs created within this and other nearby areas with industrial and corporate park designations. The Comprehensive Plan identifies an existing area of Mixed Use Commercial to the southeast of this site and a Node of Mixed Use further to the south identified to provide commercial services and moderate to high intensity residential to support surrounding existing and future industrial and corporate park developments.

The eventual extension of water and sewer services for the future GTCC campus in the northwest quadrant of this intersection, along with planned transportation improvements such as the US 220 connector, have opened up this area for development in the near future. With significant areas of lower density residential development to the east and north of this site, along with the future GTCC campus, the provision of commercial services and multifamily facilities here makes some sense. However corporate park development encouraged by the existing land use designation, combining industrial and office uses with other supporting uses in a unified manner, could also achieve similar goals.

While the Comprehensive Plan supports the protection of areas for future economic development, it also encourages the placement of varying residential uses and supporting services in close proximity to each other and encourages more compact and efficient growth on the city's periphery. The placement of the new GTCC campus in this area will conceivably generate demand for multifamily and commercial services in immediate proximity to the campus that are not currently available. Such uses could also serve the large existing lower density residential areas that currently must travel further south for services, adding to congestion on NC 68. However staff would strongly encourage non industrial and corporate park uses to be limited to immediately adjacent to the future GTCC campus to allow for better mixed use integration and to maintain the remainder of the current corporate/business park area for future economic development.

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

City services provided to the future GTCC campus to the north would also be utilized by this site.

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

The approval of this request could encourage additional changes for other properties in this area from Interim Corporate/Business Park to other designations. Staff would discourage expansion of non-corporate park designations further from the future GTCC campus at this time.

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

The location of the new GTCC campus in this area (with a focus of supporting future airport area industrial and corporate park uses) has accelerated the potential for other related development. In addition to supporting larger economic development goals, it is anticipated that the new campus will also generate the need for some limited commercial and moderate to higher intensity residential uses adjacent to the campus.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department recommends approval of the proposed amendment. In conjunction with this favorable recommendation staff would stress the need for strong pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between uses within the Mixed Use Commercial site, and between the site and the future GTCC campus. Staff also encourages the placement and orientation of new buildings towards major roadways on Lebourne Road and NC 68, as applicable, and the use of integrated design for the entire site to promote unified appearance and function.