



Wake Forest Community Plan Update and Future Land Use Map Agenda – Business Focus Group (2e)

October 7, 2020 | 9:00-10:00 a.m. EST

On October 7, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. EST, the Town of Wake Forest and Houseal Lavigne’s project consultant team hosted a virtual Business Focus Group for the Community Plan Update and Land Use Plan. The meeting included an introduction of the project team, an overview of the planning process and project schedule, and a discussion of land use issues and opportunities. The following is a summary of feedback received from business community members during the meeting.

Housing

- There is high demand for housing in walkable distance to Downtown. Some units are currently sold so quickly that they are not listed on the market.
- Higher density housing located near Downtown would also help local businesses.
- The style of townhomes is an issue as units are lacking ground floor master bedrooms for older residents.
- Wake Forest has numerous apartments, but none targeted for people with disabilities. There is a need to increase options and affordability for this population. This includes more ground floor bedrooms and ramp designs for accessibility.
- Cost of land is expensive which is driving up the cost of housing units.

Character & Streetscape

- The streetscape along the Brook Street townhomes needs improvement/beautification.
- Future development should match the historic character of the Downtown, maintaining the density, charm, look, and feel of the area.
- The “unwind” character of development within the Downtown with rooftop areas for entertainment and socializing are desirable.
- Townhomes with upper-floor terraces improve the character of the Downtown with an urban, fun, and lively feel.

Economic Development

- Businesses recently have begun to open back up during COVID-19 and there has been improvement in the number of people Downtown.



Community Plan Update

- Residents want to support local businesses and avoid big box stores as much as they can.
- There is a desire for additional businesses that would bring more vibrancy and traffic Downtown.
- Downtown has a great vacancy rate ranging between 4-7%.
- The Department of Downtown Development is working on a vacant storefront ordinance, which will help activate storefronts by requiring signage or some other use during time of vacancy.
- There has been high interest from smoke shop businesses to locate to Wake Forest.
- The most active commercial corridors include the following:
 - Rogers Road
 - Stadium Drive and Capital Boulevard (Wake Forest Crossing)
 - Capital Boulevard between Durham Road and Dr Calvin Jones Highway

Development Opportunities

- Brooks Street, Elm Avenue, and Wait Avenue are ideal locations for mixed use development.
- Dab International Inc. and the old SunTrust Bank property are key redevelopment sites.
- A boutique hotel with a parking deck (with public and private use) would be a great addition to the Downtown, potentially at the SunTrust Bank property.
- Lafayette Village in Raleigh should be looked to as an innovative example of a “village” type development. It could potentially be replicated behind the Dabs International Inc. property to provide an area in the Downtown where people can gather and children can play. Lafayette Village includes an underground parking garage.
- The old sporting goods store on Capital Boulevard is a key development site that can act as a gateway into Wake Forest. Portions of the site are a brownfield.
- Village owns between 80 to 90 acres along Foundation Drive off Forestville Road, which is a significant development opportunity.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- CSX recently received a federal grant for potential improvements to the railroad line that runs along Downtown. This will affect how entry and connectivity into Downtown can be improved.
- The Chamber of Commerce inspected the railroad tracks in early 2020 to identify a potential location for a depot, including for commuter rail service.
- Walkability near Downtown is critical to connect nearby residents, especially with higher density residential development.
- There is need for an enhanced pedestrian crossing at the Front Street and Roosevelt Avenue intersection.
- Rogers Road will be expanded to five lanes, which may impact development opportunities and traffic.



Community Plan Update

- Capital Boulevard will become a limited access freeway that can only be accessed by interchanges (such as at the Burlington Mills Road/Main Street/Harris Road/98 Bypass/Durham Road intersections). Access roads will be constructed, but the plans for their location and design have not been announced by NCDOT.