

WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
TENNESSEE



COMPREHENSIVE  
LAND USE PLAN

Adopted August 16, 2007

# COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

*Adopted by Resolution*

*of the Williamson County Regional Planning Commission on  
the sixteenth day of August, two thousand seven,  
and endorsed by the  
Williamson County Board of County Commissioners  
on the tenth day of September two thousand seven.*



August 16, 2007

**RESOLUTION OF THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
AT FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE**

**WHEREAS**, Williamson County, Tennessee by and through its Regional Planning Commission currently has a Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Planning Commission endeavored to study and gather public input in order to update and revise that Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Planning Commission has created a revised vision for Williamson County, Tennessee; and

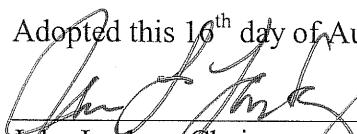
**WHEREAS**, that vision is expressed by the revised and updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan, a copy of which is attached to this Resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Planning Commission finds that it is in the best interest of Williamson County to adopt the attached revised and updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Williamson County Regional Planning Commission that the attached Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the maps incorporated or referenced therein is hereby adopted and effective on this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2007.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Williamson County Regional Planning Commission directs that a copy of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the maps referenced and incorporated therein be transmitted to the Board of County Commissioners for its consideration.

Adopted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2007

  
John Lackey, Chairman

  
Mike Matteson, Secretary

RESOLUTION NO. 9-07-24

Requested by: Regional Planning Commission

**RESOLUTION OF THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO ENDORSE THE REVISED  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, Williamson County, Tennessee by and through its Regional Planning Commission currently has a Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted in 1988; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1988, Williamson County has experienced significant and unprecedented growth in population; and

**WHEREAS**, the Williamson County Board of Commissioners established the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update Steering Committee (hereafter "Steering Committee") comprised of County Commissioners, Planning Commissioners and private citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the Steering Committee and Regional Planning Commission endeavored to study and gather public input in order to update and revise that Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Steering Committee and Regional Planning Commission conducted thirteen (13) public hearings throughout Williamson County and three (3) meetings with the Plan Forum which consisted of approximately 300 individuals who expressed an interest in the Plan Update throughout the study process; and

**WHEREAS**, through this study and public input, the Steering Committee and Regional Planning Commission have created a revised vision for Williamson County, Tennessee; and

**WHEREAS**, that vision is expressed by the revised and updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan, a copy of which is attached and incorporated into this Resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 26, 2007 the Steering Committee, by unanimous vote, recommended adoption of this revised and updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 16, 2007 the Regional Planning Commission, by unanimous vote, adopted this revised and updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan and resolved to forward the Plan to the Board of Commissioners for its endorsement.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Williamson County Board of Commissioners on this the 10<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2007 that the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the maps incorporated or referenced therein is hereby endorsed.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Williamson County Board of Commissioners directs that the Plan and the maps incorporated therein be spread upon the Minutes of the Board of Commissioners and that a copy of the Plan be provided to each municipality within Williamson County.

  
Mary Brockman, County Commissioner

  
Judy Hayes, County Commissioner

**COMMITTEES REFERRED TO AND ACTION TAKEN:**

Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee: For: 5 Against: 0

Regional Planning Commission: For: 9 Against: 0

Commission Action Taken: For: 21 Against: 0 Pass: \_\_\_\_\_ Out: \_\_\_\_\_

Elaine Anderson

Elaine Anderson, County Clerk

Houston Naron, Jr.

Houston Naron, Jr., Commission Chairman

Rogers C. Anderson

Rogers C. Anderson, County Mayor

9-20-09

Date

# Acknowledgements

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---

Mary Brockman, County Commissioner 9th District	John Lackey, Chairman and Planning Commission Chairman Judy Hayes, County Commissioner 3rd District	Tom Murdic, Planning Commissioner (Feb. 8, 2007-Completion)
Don Crohan, Planning Commissioner and Board of Zoning Appeals	Boyce Magli Aubrey Preston	James H. Lamb, Planning Commissioner (Feb. 10, 2003-Feb. 8, 2007)

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Tim Neal	Victor Andrews	Mike Delvizis	Gary Buchanan
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	Linda Cochran	Ginger Shirling	

## Schools

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Williamson County Board of Education for use of the school facilities, and

✉ Tracy Lampley,  
Principal,  
Hillsboro Elementary School

✉ Jason Pearson,  
Principal,  
Hillsboro Elementary School

✉ Josie Jacobs,  
Principal,  
Page Middle School

✉ Anita C. Anderson,  
Principal,  
Page Middle School

✉ Dr. Susan Curtis,  
Principal,  
Grassland Middle School

## *Others*

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- ¤ Home Builders Assoc. of TN
- ¤ Williamson Co. Economic Development
- ¤ Brentwood Chamber of Commerce
  - ¤ Milcrofton Utility District
  - ¤ Williamson Co. Parks & Rec.
- ¤ Nancy Conway, Chamber of Commerce
  - ¤ Harpeth Valley Utility District
  - ¤ Harpeth River Watershed Assoc.
- ¤ HB & TS Utility District
- ¤ Tom Loenthal
- ¤ Save the Franklin Battlefields
  - ¤ Heritage Foundation
- ¤ Williamson County Farm Bureau
- ¤ Cumberland Region Tomorrow
  - ¤ WAKM AM 950 Radio

## *WC-TV 3*

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### *Introduction*

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The Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan represents a vision as to how the County will grow and develop. It articulates the County's policy for future desired land use patterns, quality and character of growth, the relationship between land use and the natural and historic environment, and the relationship between land use and public facilities. The Plan is long range – it uses twenty (20) years as its planning horizon – and it focuses on County-wide themes. While its focus is on unincorporated County territory, it was prepared in light of municipal and Urban Growth Boundary plans.

As a statement of public policy, the Plan should be used in several ways. First, it should be used as a guide to decision making in the development review process. When new development is proposed, the Plan should be used as a guide to help determine whether development plans are in the public interest, as expressed in the Plan. Second, the Plan should help guide decisions about public facilities. Plans for road improvements, new schools, and other public facilities should be made in light of the land use pattern envisioned in this Plan. Finally, the Plan should be used as a basis for implementing tools to make the Plan a reality. Implementing tools such as the zoning code should be updated to be brought into conformance with the Plan.

The Plan reflects an understanding of the growth forces and trends that are shaping the County, based on extensive analysis of growth patterns and projections. It expresses the growth "values" of the County in the form of goals and objectives. The core of the Plan is the land use element that depicts the desired future growth and development pattern. Finally, it includes detailed implementation strategies for making the Plan a reality.

### *The Planning Process*

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This Plan was prepared in close consultation with a series of community-based groups. First, the Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Steering Committee oversaw the direct management of the planning process and worked to help staff and consultants balance and reconcile the various points of view in the

community. The Steering Committee had representatives of the County Commission, the County Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals and the general citizenry. The Steering Committee worked in close collaboration with the Williamson County planning staff and consultants.

The Plan was also developed with input from a broad based Plan Forum. The Plan Forum consisted of approximately 75 individuals who served as a sounding board for ideas during the planning process. The Plan Forum met on four (4) occasions throughout the planning process.

The planning process also involved extensive public participation. A series of four (4) public meetings were held in different geographic areas of the County on four (4) separate occasions during the planning process. Public meetings were held to discuss planning issues, to review and respond to planning goals, to review and respond to the land use plan element, and to review and respond to the implementation strategies. Each round of public meetings provided valuable input into the direction of the Plan, allowing it to reflect a broad base of community values.

## ***Plan Overview***

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The Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is organized into five chapters, including this introductory chapter. In addition to this introduction, the Plan includes the following:

### ***Chapter 2 - Background and Issues***

This Chapter contains a summary of the research and analysis that served as the basis for the Plan. It includes a detailed analysis of land use patterns, trends, and growth estimates. It first estimates the amount of growth that could occur based upon existing land use patterns, constraints to development, and existing land use regulations. This capacity analysis concludes that given current land use regulations and assumptions about constraints, an additional 67,000 dwelling units could be accommodated, 56,000 units of which could occur on platted lots (lots of less than five (5) acres) and 11,000 units of which could occur on non-platted lots (lots of greater than five (5) acres), as further explained and delineated throughout this Plan. This chapter also includes population and dwelling unit forecasts which illustrate the potential "demand" for new growth and development over the next twenty (20) years. According to the analysis, demand for new dwellings is forecasted to be between approximately 8,400 and 16,000 dwelling units. Of that demand,

10,000 units are forecasted to occur on platted lots and 6,000 units are forecasted to occur on non-platted lots.

## ***Chapter 3 - Vision, Goals, and Objectives***

This chapter includes an overall vision for the County as well as a series of goals and objectives related to:

- ❖ Land Use
- ❖ Community Facilities and Services
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Natural and Cultural Resources
- ❖ Economic Development
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Inter-Governmental Coordination

The major themes that are emphasized in these goals and objectives include the importance of:

- ❖ Efficient growth, particularly relative to the cost and timing of providing infrastructure and public services
- ❖ Fiscally responsible land use planning
- ❖ Rural and open space preservation
- ❖ Conservation and protection of the natural environment
- ❖ Historic and cultural preservation
- ❖ The relationship between land use planning and transportation planning
- ❖ Coordination of land use planning between Williamson County and its municipalities

## ***Chapter 4 - Land Use Element***

This chapter lays out a proposed future land use pattern that is designed to achieve the goals and objectives in Chapter 3. The Plan proposes future land uses outside of designated Urban Growth Boundaries in the following categories:

- ❖ Rural Preservation
- ❖ Rural Development
- ❖ Hamlet
- ❖ Village
- ❖ 840 Center
- ❖ Suburban Infill and Conservation

For each land use category, background is provided as to the planning issues, opportunities, and challenges. A vision statement is then provided for each, followed by the development policies that will guide the County in future land use discussions and decisions.

## ***Chapter 5 - Implementation Strategies***

This chapter builds on the goals and objectives in Chapter 3 and the land use element in Chapter 4. It provides a “road map” of specific actions that should be taken to achieve the vision and implement the land use element. The strategies are organized around five “core” plan elements or themes, including:

- ❖ Land use patterns;
- ❖ Coordinating the availability of public facilities with development;
- ❖ Open space protection;
- ❖ Natural resource protection; and
- ❖ Historic/cultural resource protection.

For each theme, a series of strategies are provided to achieve the Plan recommendations for those themes. In many cases, these recommended strategies include regulatory changes such as zoning amendments, while others involve planning initiatives that require action by the County.

A series of appendices are also included in the Plan. These include: Appendix 1 which explains the concept of conservation subdivisions, which is a desired tool to help implement the rural preservation objectives of the Plan; Appendix 2 which includes a further explanation of the use of purchase of development rights; and Appendix 3 which provides a more detailed summary of the analysis that serves as the basis for Chapter 2.

This Plan represents a next step forward for planning in Williamson County. Many of the ideas in the Plan represent a continuation or evolution of planning policies that have been used by the County in the past. The intent of this Plan is to continue the long and successful history of planning in Williamson County, but to encourage planning to move to the next level to prepare the County for the next twenty (20) years of growth and change.

# Chapter 2

## BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

### *Introduction*

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This Plan was developed in light of several different ways of thinking about the future. The first involves an understanding of the growth forces and trends that are shaping the community. This perspective is first framed by the current system of planning in Williamson County. It is also based on research and analysis of land use patterns and constraints along with demographic trends. It involves an understanding of the ability of the County to accommodate growth given current policies (the “capacity” for growth) balanced with the amount of growth that can be reasonably forecasted (the “demand” for growth).

The second way of thinking about the future is based on an understanding of the attitudes and desires of County citizens about growth. This second way of looking at the future is more difficult to quantify because it involves a complex network of community organizations and individual interests that often have competing values, but it is perhaps the most important factor in planning for the future – what do the citizens of Williamson County want to see the County become?

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize how these two ways of thinking about the future shaped this Plan.

### *Land Use Planning Background in Williamson County*

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In order to understand this Plan, one must first understand that Williamson County has a long and relatively successful history of planning. This Plan is an update to a current plan that has served the County well. Many of the policies embodied in the current plan and the practices implemented through the County land use regulations were once ahead of their time for rural counties. The methods of preserving environmentally sensitive lands and the system of “traffic sheds” incorporated into the development review process have been fairly successful in dealing with many of the impacts of growth to date. For example, the way in which density on a site can be adjusted based on environmental and road capacities has helped to reduce the amount of growth that would otherwise have been too much for

certain areas to handle. Generally speaking, the current plan has guided the County well in managing the growth pressures. However, the planning landscape continues to change, and Williamson County planning must continue to evolve.

Since the current plan was prepared, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted a new statutory method of local community planning. Specifically, Public Chapter 1101 adopted in 1998 established a requirement for a comprehensive growth policy plan in each County that outlines anticipated development during the next 20 years. This growth policy plan is designed around a framework of "urban growth boundaries" (UGB), regions which contain the corporate limits of a municipality and the adjoining territory where growth is expected; "planned growth areas" (PGA), compact sections outside incorporated municipalities where growth is expected (if there are such areas in the County), and where new incorporations may occur; "rural areas" (RA), territory not within one of the other two categories which is to be preserved for agriculture, recreation, forest, wildlife, and uses other than high-density commercial or residential development.

The statutorily mandated growth policy plan created a new framework for land use planning. This Plan is designed around that framework. Specifically, this Plan focuses on the areas that in the Williamson County growth policy plan are designated as Rural or as PGA's. It is based on the assumption that the municipalities will carry out their responsibilities to plan both for the areas within municipal boundaries as well as the areas with the UGB's. It does recognize, however, that the bulk of the land within the UGB's is unincorporated County land under County planning and zoning jurisdiction. While that UGB land is ultimately envisioned as being municipal growth area, its ultimate annexation may not occur for some time, creating the need for close coordination between the County and the municipalities. In fact, it is in the County's interest for the UGB land to grow and develop in an efficient way to accommodate municipal growth pressures, since growth that occurs within the UGB is that much less growth needed to be accommodated on rural County lands.

## *Forces and Trends Shaping the County*

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In order to effectively plan for the future growth and development of the unincorporated County, it is important to understand how much growth is likely to occur in the future and to evaluate whether and how this projected growth can be reasonably accommodated. The amount of anticipated future growth can be considered the "demand", while the ability of the land area to accommodate the projected growth can be considered the "capacity". A comparison of these sets of analyses (demand vs. capacity) provides a basis from which land use policies may be developed and evaluated.

Accordingly, one of the early stages in the plan update process involved the development of technical reports in which capacity, population and demand were analyzed for the unincorporated County.

Appendix 3 of this Plan contains a full description of the method of analyzing demand and capacity along with the full results of that analysis. It describes how land capacity can be estimated based on existing land use patterns, existing zoning requirements, and natural constraints to growth. It includes estimates of potential future demand for growth, based on historic trends projected into the future. It demonstrates that growth is expected to continue at brisk pace of approximately 1.35 % per year over the next twenty years. On the other hand, the theoretic capacity for growth based on existing zoning, factoring in reasonable assumptions for constraints to development, is substantially more than the forecasted growth. During the planning process, this relationship between a high capacity relative to forecasted demand created substantial discussion around the question of how to plan for this growth, and included concerns about the possible sprawled pattern of growth that could occur. Table 1 illustrates the County's ability to accommodate Demand and Capacity.

*Table 1: Summary of Demand vs. Capacity*

	Dwelling Units	Approximate Acres
Demand	8,467 to 15,691	24,500 to 46,000
Capacity	67,216	100,000

## *Community Attitudes*

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The results of this research and analysis helped to provide “food for thought” during the many community workshops held during the planning process, and helped provide focus to public discussions. The result of the public workshops described in Chapter 1 was a series of consensus planning themes. The themes described below were based on public workshops, and were tested with the Steering Committee, the Plan Forum, the County Commission, the Planning Commission, and subsequent public workshops. As such, they represent the core of community “values” as they relate to growth and change. They serve as the basis of the vision, goals, and objectives contained in Chapter 3.

### ***Rural and Open Space Protection***

There is consensus among the public that rural character and open spaces are important community amenities and should be preserved as much as is feasible. The method by which rural character preservation and open space could be accomplished varied among different community groups; however, the idea of permanently preserving rural open space is a key theme throughout this Plan.

### ***Natural Resource Protection***

There is consensus that there are certain natural resources in the County that need protection. These include, but are not limited to water quality, historic roads, stone walls, farmland, forestland, and streams, in addition to the overall rural character of the County. Flood control and the need for stricter environmental standards are important values, as is the conservation of water. Many are concerned about the quality and quantity of water resources and the ability of the current water supply to keep up with growth.

### ***Transportation***

There is consensus that transportation is an important issue affecting quality of life. While many of the complaints about traffic are associated with municipal growth, the timing of the transportation network with development is a primary concern, in addition to the negative impact that new development can have on the transportation system. Designation of historic, i.e. landmark, roads is a concern particularly in the northern and western portions of the County.

## ***Historic Preservation***

There is consensus that the history and the character of the County is very important and needs to be protected.

## ***Other Public Services***

There is consensus that future growth will create a strain on public services and facilities beyond roads, and that careful planning is needed to allow public services and facilities to keep up with growth. Schools are a high priority for concern, particularly the funding needed to provide future schools. However, fire, police, medical, healthcare, water, and sewer are also a concern to the public. There are related concerns about the ability of growth to pay for itself, referring to the relationship between the cost of facilities and the revenue generated by new growth to pay for those facilities.

## ***Sewage Treatment and Disposal***

There is substantial concern about the use of new alternative sewage treatment technology, as contrasted with either publicly owned and operated sewer systems or conventional septic systems. Specifically, there is concern that new technology of decentralized systems will create pressures for growth resulting in rural sprawl without an understanding of the long term impacts of allowing decentralized systems on a development by development, rather than a regional, basis.

## ***Sprawl***

There is consensus that “sprawl” threatens the rural farmland character of the community. There is consensus that zoning is an important tool to control sprawl.

## ***Intergovernmental Coordination***

There is consensus that the County and its municipalities must work better together to coordinate growth and planning. There is concern that a lack of communication between the governmental County and the municipalities will make planning more difficult.

## *Integrating Facts and Values*

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These planning themes establish a foundation of values for the Plan. However, a good comprehensive plan should balance the factual understanding of planning forces with an understanding of community attitudes and desires. On the one hand, a plan should not simply be an uninformed “wish list”, nor does it simply grow inevitably out of sound technical research and analysis. A good plan should strive to integrate the fact based research with the value based community outreach. The next chapter of the Plan is the result of integrating the two related strands of facts and values, in the form of a vision, goals, and objectives.

There is overall strong consistency between the fact based research, the community values, the community vision, the land use element, and the implementation recommendation as laid out in this Plan. However, it should be acknowledged that there were substantial public discussions and differing opinions as to how to achieve some of the objectives of the Plan, particularly related to the theme of rural preservation. On the one hand, there was almost universal acceptance and embracing of the importance of preserving rural areas of the County. On the other hand, there was not universal consensus as to how to do that, particularly as it relates to the underlying residential densities permitted in rural areas. Some thought that permitted densities should be reduced to retain rural character, while others thought that reducing densities would be unfair to property owners, resulting in owners carrying too much of the burden of open space preservation.

As part of the planning process, several alternative density recommendations were offered for community review. These included alternatives that would have reduced the underlying densities in certain areas. After considerable opposition to these alternatives during public meetings, this Plan does not recommend reducing allowable rural densities. It does, however, include recommendations about strengthening the use of alternative form of rural subdivisions, improving natural resource protection standards, and becoming more active in permanently preserving opens spaces through the purchase of land or development rights. Given the conclusion of this Plan that the reduction of allowable density is not consistent with overall community values, the preservation of open space and rural character must be pursued aggressively through these other means identified in this Plan if it is to be accomplished.

## *Conclusion*

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This Plan does not call for a radical departure from the past – what it proposes is that the County continues to evolve in its planning. While the current planning and regulatory system has much to offer, much is yet to be done. With this understanding of the background planning issues, the remainder of this Plan is devoted to the vision for the County, how to help achieve that vision through land use policy, and the implementation tools that are needed to make the Plan a reality.



# Chapter 3

## VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### *Introduction*

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This chapter outlines a vision and supporting goals and objectives for the Update to the Williamson County Comprehensive Plan. This represents an important milestone in the preparation of the Plan. These goals are based on both an understanding of the trends and forces shaping Williamson County as well as an understanding of the desires of the community as communicated through various community outreach efforts.

The vision, goals and objectives are organized around several themes. These themes are:

- ❖ Land Use
- ❖ Community Facilities and Services
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Natural and Cultural Resources
- ❖ Economic Development
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Intergovernmental Coordination

The vision, goals and objectives serve as the basis for strategies that embody actions to accomplish the goals; the strategies and more specific plan recommendations will be developed later, after public reaction to these goals is solicited.



## *Williamson County Vision*

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Williamson County will continue to be a rural County with new growth limited to agricultural and very low-density residential uses in designated rural areas; moderate-density residential and non-residential uses in limited Planned Growth Areas; and higher densities in designated areas around municipal boundaries. The character of rural historic landscapes and Villages will be preserved and strengthened, and open spaces and environmental resources will be preserved as part of connected systems. Adequate public services and facilities will be available in a fiscally responsible manner concurrent with new development, with levels of service to be coordinated with land use policies – areas designated for rural development will be provided with rural levels of services, and areas designated for higher or suburban densities will be provided with suburban levels of services. The Williamson County economy will be strong and diverse, with economic development opportunities strategically focused in Planned Growth Areas and within the Urban Growth Boundaries. Williamson County will have a balanced range of housing that provides opportunities for residents of all generations.

## *Land Use Goals and Objectives*

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### **Goal 1: Efficient Growth**

Williamson County will grow and develop efficiently relative to the cost and timing of providing infrastructure and public services.

**Objective 1:** Growth will be coordinated with available or planned public services and infrastructure.

**Objective 2:** Land use will be planned in concert with public services and infrastructure. Low-density uses will be planned in areas not efficiently served by public services, and compatible higher densities will be planned in areas that can be efficiently served with public services pursuant to the future land use plan.

**Objective 3:** A compact development pattern will be identified that results in a more cost efficient infrastructure expansion and the reduction in the perception and/or realities of urban sprawl. Open space and rural preservation, along with the protection of our natural and historic resources will be promoted through a compact development pattern with new growth encouraged to occur in and around existing or planned population centers. Urban and suburban types of growth will be discouraged in rural areas that do not have sufficient services.

**Objective 4:** The County will use this Comprehensive Plan as a tool for making development decisions regarding land use, zoning, and the expansion of public infrastructure.

## *Goal 2: Fiscally Sound Growth*

Williamson County will grow and develop with a fiscally responsible land use pattern where new growth will fund its fair share of the costs of public services and facilities needed as a result of that growth.

**Objective 1:** The costs of growth will be allocated fairly between local governments and the development community. Growth should generally pay its own way and new developments should include appropriate road improvements, as well as public land dedications or equivalent funds-in-lieu for schools, parks, and public service facilities that will be demanded by the new development.

**Objective 2:** Williamson County will develop a system of measuring fiscal impacts of growth in a manner consistent with regional methods and models.

## *Goal 3: Suburban and Rural Distinctions*

Existing and planned suburban areas will be stable, vibrant, and well defined; development in rural areas will be reflective of low-density developments that are designed to maintain the true rural character of the area.

**Objective 1:** Distinctions between areas currently categorized into Rural districts, Estate districts, Suburban Estate districts, Suburban districts, Neighborhood Conservation districts, and Crossroad districts will be clearly defined in terms of appropriate land uses, quality and character of development designs, geographic delineation, and their relationships to public services and facilities.

**Objective 2:** Growth will continue to be organized around a geographic system of Urban Growth Boundaries, Planned Growth Areas and Rural Areas, consistent with Tennessee Public Chapter 1101.

**Objective 3:** New urban or suburban development will be targeted in or around the existing cities and designated major activity areas at densities that promote an efficient utilization of land while being compatible with existing neighborhoods and municipal comprehensive plans. Planned Growth Areas will accommodate new growth with a balance of land uses, including open spaces, although certain Planned Growth Areas, or portions of Planned Growth Areas may continue to maintain a rural character based on the future land use plan.

**Objective 4:** Development in Rural Areas will maintain rural character. Lower gross densities will be preserved in those Rural Areas, with new development concentrated on a smaller portion of a development site so as to permanently preserve open space. Particular emphasis will be placed on preserving environmentally and/or historically sensitive areas. Compatible rural businesses will be accommodated within the Rural Areas.

**Objective 5:** Existing Villages and Hamlets will be preserved. Villages will be preserved through the creation of a focused area plan and development guidelines designed to allow new developments only when they are deemed to be compatible with the existing character of the area, including historic character where appropriate. Hamlets will be preserved through review of development proposals pursuant to policies of this Plan.

**Objective 6:** The continuation of agricultural and equestrian uses is encouraged, but as such uses are converted to non-agricultural uses, the rural density, character and sensitive environmental features of the area will be preserved.

## *Goal 4: Quality of Growth*

Williamson County will ensure that land resources are allocated for uses that will accommodate and enhance the rural character, protect

the natural and historic resources, ensure adequate community facilities, and provide a range of housing - resulting in the preservation of a high quality of life.

**Objective 1:** The opportunities presented by growth will be maximized, and the negative impacts of growth (i.e. traffic, land use, storm water, environmental, loss of community character) will be minimized.

**Objective 2:** The design quality and appearance of new development in Williamson County will be exemplary. High standards for residential and non-residential development quality will be implemented and enforced – with emphasis on land use compatibility, open space preservation, traffic impacts, and environmental impacts.

**Objective 3:** Williamson County will continue to encourage citizen input through the development review process as a means to further promote design quality.

## *Natural and Cultural Resources Goals and Objectives*

### ***Goal 1: Conservation and Protection***

Williamson County will conserve and protect the natural environment, open spaces, and historic resources for which it has come to be known.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County will protect unique resources from the negative impacts of development including, but not limited to, water quality, historic roads and sites, stone walls, farmland, forests, streams and rural character.

**Objective 2:** Williamson County will continue to implement and enforce measures designed to protect natural resources such as watershed protection, water conservation activities, stream and lake setbacks, and floodplain controls.

**Objective 3:** Williamson County will promote and emphasize the protection of natural and historic resources in areas where major infrastructure, such as regional transportation facilities, are proposed.

**Objective 4:** The preservation of environmental quality will be emphasized in planning for new development and public services.

## *Goal 2: Open Space Preservation*

Williamson County will promote the permanent preservation of open space systems throughout the County for the purpose of environmental protection, community character and aesthetics, recreation, and heritage tourism, with an emphasis on farmland, woodlands, hilltops and slopes and other environmentally sensitive areas.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County will develop and implement coordinated plans for a linked system of open space and conservation areas.

**Objective 2:** Williamson County will develop a variety of public and private tools to preserve open space in order to maximize the opportunities to protect open space over the long-term.

**Objective 3:** Williamson County will encourage the preservation and incorporation of open space in individual developments pursuant to design standards that promote quality open space that is usable and accessible to all residents. These open spaces will be coordinated with, and linked to open space in adjacent developments and other communities.

## *Goal 3: Historic Preservation*

The preservation of Williamson County's historic resources will be promoted as an important contributor to the community's livability and quality of life, as well as the community's economic development.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County will develop a plan that will help identify and prioritize significant historic resources within the community as well as a variety of methods to protect such resources long into the future.

## *Community Facilities and Services Goals and Objectives*

### ***Goal 1: Efficient Public Facilities and Services***

In order to foster an efficient provision of services, development will occur in a more compact form, with growth oriented in and around existing and planned service areas.

**Objective 1:** Growth will generally be directed toward existing or planned service areas and pushed away from rural areas with rural levels of services.

**Objective 2:** New residential uses (other than low-density rural residential) will be directed to areas that can be efficiently served with sanitary sewers or are appropriate for alternative sewer technologies, but only pursuant to the future land use plan.

### ***Goal 2: Adequate Public Facilities and Services***

Williamson County will ensure that public facilities have the capacity, are coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan, and are in place when needed to support and attract growth and development and maintain quality of life. Land use decisions will be made based on identification of appropriate patterns pursuant to the future land use plan, not on the availability of alternative sewer technology.

**Objective 1:** New development will be served with public facilities that meet or exceed level of service standards for public facilities that will be developed or refined as part of the implementation of this Plan.

**Objective 2:** Fair and predictable standards will be developed for allocating infrastructure costs between the development community and the County.

**Objective 3:** The County will focus alternative sewage technologies that promote higher density developments into areas where growth is encouraged only where alternative sewage technologies are part of a comprehensive solution.

**Objective 4:** The County will establish policies and practices that control the location and operation of alternative sewage technologies with the interest of public health, safety and welfare in mind, either through regulation or through public operation and maintenance. Specifically, future land use patterns will not be driven by the availability of alternative sewer technology.

### ***Goal 3: Government, Health, and Education***

Williamson County will help provide adequate and accessible government facilities and health care facilities, and will support the provision of educational facilities to all of its citizens.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County schools will meet and exceed all state requirements for education programs and facilities while continuing to identify alternative methods to fund educational services throughout the community.

## ***Transportation Goals and Objectives***

### ***Goal 1: Adequate Transportation System***

Williamson County will provide a transportation system designed to move people and goods and provide a level of service that supports targeted economic development and maintains a high quality of life.

**Objective 1:** Growth will be coordinated with adequate existing or planned transportation facilities.

**Objective 2:** Land use will be planned in concert with transportation facilities. Low-density uses will be planned in areas not efficiently served by transportation facilities, and compatible higher densities may be planned in areas that can be efficiently served with transportation facilities (and other public facilities) pursuant to the future land use plan.

**Objective 3:** Williamson County will coordinate with other municipal and regional agencies to plan for transportation improvements in a method that will improve the timing of development relative to transportation improvements. Specifically, new roadways or roadway improvements will be promoted to be concurrent with new growth and development.

**Objective 4:** Williamson County will coordinate transportation improvements and level of service standards using the Comprehensive Plan as a tool. Specifically, Rural Areas that are intended to remain rural will continue to be provided with rural levels of service.

**Objective 5:** Williamson County will work with municipal, regional, and state agencies to incorporate context sensitive road designs to minimize negative impacts from new roadway projects, especially along designated historic or scenic corridors.

## *Goal 2: Transportation Alternatives*

Williamson County will continue to explore and promote mechanisms to alleviate traffic congestion through the use of alternative modes of transportation, and better management of the existing road network.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County will continue to identify opportunities to incorporate alternative transportation modes. In particular, Williamson County will cooperate with other jurisdictions to promote alternative modes of transportation on a regional basis.

# *Economic Development Goals and Objectives*

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## *Goal 1: Balanced Economy*

Williamson County will continue to enjoy a growing and balanced economy, which will equitably benefit all segments of the population and will be consistent with prudent management of the County's resources.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County will promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

**Objective 2:** Williamson County will use economic development opportunities as a method of funding growth and the related infrastructure and public facilities needs that growth creates.

**Objective 3:** Williamson County will focus economic development opportunities in Planned Growth Areas and within the Urban Growth Boundaries, with the exception that agricultural, heritage tourism, or rural oriented businesses are encouraged in Rural Areas.

**Objective 4:** Williamson County will encourage the retention of local retail in Rural Areas, and encourage new compatible small scale local retail in Rural Areas.

## ***Housing Goals and Objectives***

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### ***Goal 1: Quality and Diverse Housing***

Williamson County will support a balanced range of adequate life-span housing options designed to meet the needs of its ever changing demographics.

**Objective 1:** A better balance of housing price points will be targeted in order to provide a diverse range of housing options.

**Objective 2:** Housing diversity will be further pursued to meet the needs of the County's changing demographics, including higher density and attached housing options in targeted areas, particularly targeted at the aging population.

**Objective 3:** In order to provide a variety of viable housing options, the County will promote and encourage the preservation of the existing housing stock.

**Objective 4:** Compatible infill housing will be encouraged as a means to providing housing diversity.

## *Intergovernmental Coordination Goals and Objectives*

### *Goal 1: Regional Coordination*

Regional coordination will be emphasized. This coordination will set regional priorities, identify shared needs, and find collaborative solutions, particularly related to problems that transcend local jurisdiction boundaries.

**Objective 1:** Williamson County, the cities within the County, and the school system will work together to achieve the mutual goals and policies and to efficiently plan for development in the community as a whole and not as individual parts.

**Objective 2:** Mechanisms and processes for intergovernmental coordination will be explored and implemented with other jurisdictions in order to implement the policies of this Plan, including adjacent local governments, school boards, and other units of government providing services.

**Objective 3:** Williamson County will develop mechanisms designed to coordinate with the applicable portions of its land use plan with the land use plans of the municipalities, school boards and other entities. These mechanisms will be designed to ensure compatibility with those various plans and will coordinate the locations of new facilities that affect land use patterns and services.

**Objective 4:** Williamson County will develop mechanisms to resolve conflicts with other local governments, coordinate the impacts of development on adjacent areas or communities, share services or information, and engage in coordinated planning within the Urban Growth Areas.

**Objective 5:** Williamson County will develop intergovernmental tools in collaboration with the municipalities that address interim planning policies within the designated Urban Growth Boundaries prior to the time at which such territory is annexed to the municipalities.

# Chapter 4

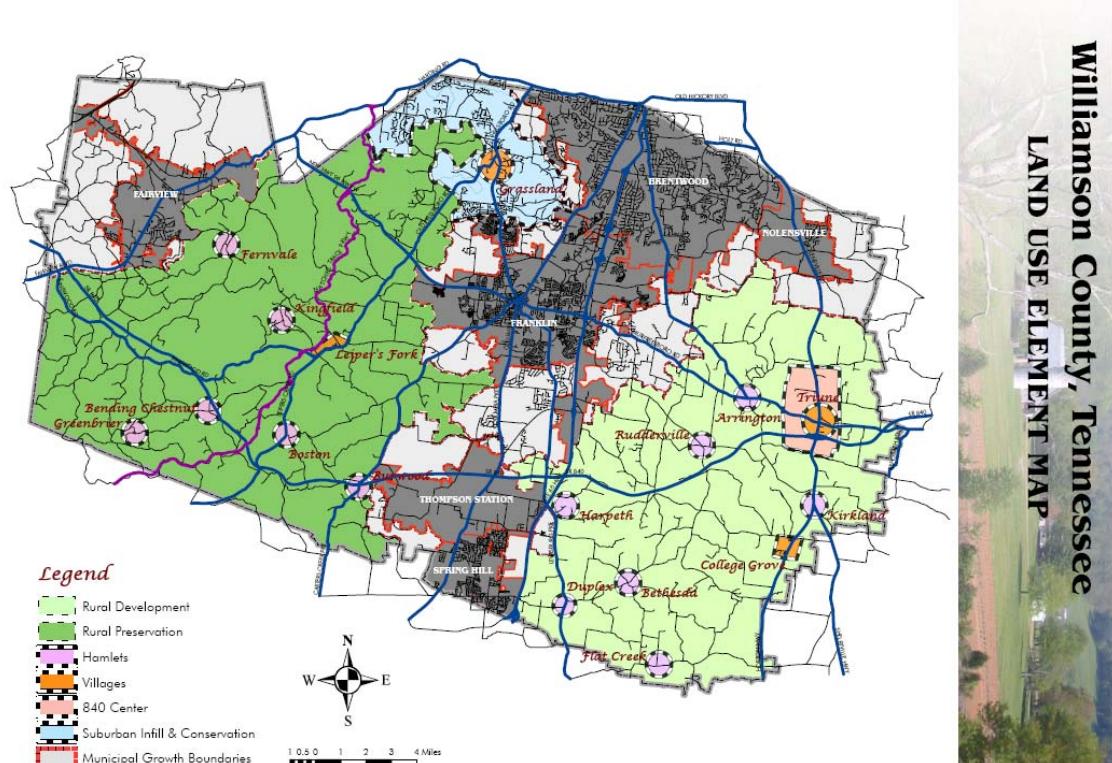
## LAND USE ELEMENT

### *Introduction*

For the purpose of the Plan, all property within unincorporated Williamson County outside of designated Urban Growth Boundaries will be placed into one of the following land use categories:

- ❖ Rural Preservation (West) and Rural Development (East)
- ❖ Hamlet
- ❖ Village
- ❖ 840 Center
- ❖ Suburban Infill and Conservation

The **Land Use Element** map below illustrates the location of these land use categories. A larger version of this map is provided at the end of this Chapter. For each land use category, background is provided as to the planning issues, opportunities, and challenges. A vision statement is then provided for each, followed by development policies that will guide the County in future land use discussions and decisions.



# *Rural Preservation and Rural Development*

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## *Background*

The Rural Areas encompass the largest land area within the Williamson County Comprehensive Plan study area. Included is all of the geographic area not contained within a Hamlet, Village, 840 Center, or Suburban Infill and Conservation Area.

The Rural Land use categories are divided between "Rural Preservation" and "Rural Development", and are distinguished primarily by the permissible densities.

As their names suggests, the Rural Preservation and Rural Development Areas are characterized primarily by rural related land uses on large tracts of land, including farms, homesteads associated with farms, large lot single family properties, conservation subdivisions with low gross densities, and wooded or forested areas. While some active farming operations continue to exist in the rural areas, very few people actually farm as their primary livelihood.

The area is served primarily by a rural level infrastructure. The area is not generally served with sanitary sewers. Public roads are typically paved roads without curb and gutters. The local road network is designed to support very low density rural levels of development.

Rural Areas are blessed with substantial historic, cultural and environmental resources. There are many historic homes and homesteads in the area as well as historic and scenic road corridors. The Natchez Trace Parkway, which is a National Scenic Byway, is located in the rural area of western Williamson County. There are numerous environmentally sensitive resources such as slopes, flood plains, and wooded and forest areas.

There are several important differences between the Rural Development Area on the east side and the Rural Preservation Area on the west side of the County. The eastern Rural Development Areas (generally east of Interstate 65) have historically been home to more active farming operations, with topography and soils that make them better suited for active agricultural uses. In the Rural Preservation Area in the western portion of the County, more severe topography and soils that are not as suited for agricultural uses have resulted in relatively fewer active agricultural areas and more wooded and forested areas. As a result, the eastern areas have historically been more developed for agricultural and supporting uses than the western areas. This historic difference is now reflected in the densities permitted by the zoning designations. Generally, much of the eastern

Rural Development Area is zoned to permit a density equivalent to one dwelling unit per acre, while much of the western Rural Development Area is zoned to permit a density equivalent to one dwelling unit per five acres. Those basic densities are proposed to continue under this Plan.

Rural Areas are highly valued by the citizens of Williamson County for their historic and environmental resources with an agrarian character that serve as a strong complement to the growing urban and suburban communities in Williamson County. The Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives are clear in calling for the Rural Areas to be preserved as low density with a rural character and rural levels of public services. There are several important influences, however, that will make the preservation of the rural character of these areas a challenge.

First, the southwestern arc of State Route 840 around the Nashville metropolitan area has already traversed the eastern portion of the Rural Area and is planned to continue to the western portion. At the current time, there are plans for seven interchanges with local Williamson County streets along Route 840. Access to this regional transportation infrastructure will undoubtedly bring additional growth pressures to this part of the region, some of which are already being felt in and around Thompson's Station and Spring Hill.

The growing popularity of alternative sewage treatment technology and its increased acceptance by the State of Tennessee is also bringing increased growth pressures into the Rural Areas. In the past, the lack of sanitary sewer solutions has acted as a natural brake on development pressures that were subject to stringent septic system requirements. Alternative sewage disposal technologies (such as various versions of land application systems) are argued to be more environmentally sensitive, at least in the short range. However, they bring with them concerns about the possible proliferation of subdivisions in rural areas, promoting sprawled development patterns that are contrary to the goals and objectives to this Plan. Further, as a relatively new technology, their long term environmental impacts are not yet known.

Regional growth patterns will also continue to change the growth dynamics in the area. The cities of Brentwood and Franklin continue to be long range growth generators, but with their history of planning and development, the effects of that growth have been relatively predictable. Recently, other communities that have previously generated little growth, such as Thompson's Station, Spring Hill, Fairview, and Nolensville, are now showing increased potential for high growth. While these communities are certainly entitled to plan for their own long term growth and progress, they do have the potential to change the growth dynamics in Williamson County by creating multiple potential growth generators.

In addition, the Rural Preservation Area in the west has seen an influx of new investment, much of it by large land owners interested in preserving the rural character of the area. While this can certainly be a very positive trend from an open space preservation perspective (much land has been permanently preserved through mechanisms such as conservation easements), it also has the potential to change the dynamics of land economics, by making land more valuable and potentially more susceptible to investment that may be interested in seeing it develop for more intensive uses.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the Rural Areas provide open space that is enjoyed by much of the County as a whole. However, this Plan recognizes that this is, in effect, "borrowed open space" in that it is open space provided by private land owners with no guarantees that it will remain. It cannot be expected to remain in its current state without active measures, including both reasonable land regulations as well as permanent mechanisms to preserve open space as discussed elsewhere in this Plan.

## *Vision*

The Rural Areas will be rural in character, with preserved natural, cultural, and historic resources, including farms, permanently preserved open spaces, hillsides, hilltops, flood plains, wooded and forested areas, historic landscapes, historic corridors, and historic farmsteads. It will include active agricultural and equestrian operations, with new residential development designed in such a way as to be balanced with the natural and existing man made environment in order to minimize the degradation of the rural, natural, cultural, and historic environment.

## *Development Policies*

The following development policies will be used when addressing development and land use issues in the Rural Areas:

- ❖ Agricultural uses are recognized as economically desirable businesses, not "vacant" land. Agricultural uses are encouraged to remain, and agricultural preservation is an important goal, but this goal should be balanced with respect for the property rights of land owners.
- ❖ Rural commercial land uses and agricultural support businesses are encouraged to exist. Examples of rural commercial uses are commercial nurseries, feed and seed stores, farmers markets, farm

implement sales and supply stores, and other farm support businesses. Larger uses that are not related to agricultural or other rural uses, such as commercial landscaping businesses with outdoor storage, and heavy equipment not used for farming are discouraged in the Rural Areas, and will be subject to impact review and mitigation during the development review process, with a heavy emphasis on land use buffers and transitions.

- ❖ Tourism uses that are compatible with rural character should be encouraged with a demonstration that proposed uses will not negatively impact existing rural or residential uses. Examples of such uses are equestrian centers and boarding facilities, nurseries, conference centers, retreat and training facilities, heritage and rural tourism destinations, farmers markets, and bed and breakfasts.
- ❖ Residents that move into Rural Areas should not expect urban services. Rural levels of service will typically not include public water, sanitary sewer, and storm water drainage facilities other than ditches.
- ❖ The environmental integrity of stream corridors should be preserved and protected.
- ❖ Agriculture should be viewed as being subject to eventual change. While the long term viability of agriculture is desirable, its future cannot be guaranteed. Thus, while the open nature of the area is enjoyed by many, and open space is a valued community amenity, agriculture should not be viewed as permanent open space. Open space preservation will require initiative and resources, as more fully described elsewhere in this Plan.
- ❖ The desired character for this area is a continuation of the historic rural and agricultural patterns, including farms, farm-service businesses, and pasture land for horses and other livestock. New residential development will be accommodated, but it is encouraged to occur in the “conservation subdivision” style, as described below.
- ❖ Flexible design that maximizes open space preservation should be promoted by separating the issue of density from minimum lot size. This approach would permit a wide range of lot dimensions (area, frontage, setbacks, etc.) and a variety of housing types (detached and semi-detached) to serve multiple markets (traditional families, single-parent households, empty-nesters, etc.). Dedication of open space should be encouraged through incentives (density bonuses) based upon net density/yield rather than minimum lot size/widths.

- ❖ Open space should be designed to form an interconnected network.
- ❖ Pathways within open space and/or sidewalks along roadways should be provided to connect to surrounding pedestrian/bicycle networks.
- ❖ Fragmentation of open space into isolated, unconnected pieces should be avoided, except to provide neighborhood parks and commons.
- ❖ Stream corridors, woodlands, hedge rows, and other valuable natural resources should be maintained as part of the dedicated open space.
- ❖ Homesteads, historic rock walls, fence rows, and other historic resources should be protected through the design and development process.
- ❖ Roadways and house lots should be located to respect natural features and to maximize exposure of lots to open space (directly abutting or across the street). “Single-loaded” streets (with homes on one side only) can be used to maximize open space visibility, thus increasing real estate values and sales, while costing no more than streets in conventional subdivisions (due to savings from narrower lot frontages).
- ❖ Open space should be used as part of an integrated storm water management approach to maintain natural drainage patterns, attenuate water quality impacts, replenish groundwater (e.g., through bio-retention facilities such as infiltration trenches and “rain gardens”) and incorporate detention facilities as visual and environmental amenities such as ponds.
- ❖ The open space can be either common or dedicated for compatible agricultural and horticultural uses (e.g., pastureland for horses, greenhouses, pick-your-own operations, community-supported agriculture, etc.).
- ❖ Open space should be carefully located between housing lots, particularly those adjacent to working farms and other sensitive uses to provide buffers.
- ❖ Open space should be located to maintain the visual character of scenic roads (e.g., “foreground meadows” or preserved agricultural fields adjacent to roads).

- ❖ Roadways should be designed to standards appropriate to the rural context (narrower widths, drainage swales, shade trees, gravel footpaths, etc.).
- ❖ Open space management should promote rehabilitation of degraded habitats. These rehabilitation activities need to pay close attention to impacts on surrounding properties, particularly when those activities involve potential alterations to drainage patterns.
- ❖ This Plan recognizes that certain division of parcels are exempt from subdivision regulations when they involve five or more acres and have sufficient road frontage. In these instances, the landowners will be encouraged to develop under the subdivision regulations which will offer flexible approaches to smaller scale parcel divisions.
- ❖ The County recognizes that the preservation of open spaces through the development review process alone will not achieve the long term goals of substantial permanent open space preservation, and that initiatives are needed that go beyond the zoning process. This approach is discussed in the implementation strategies portion of this Plan.

### *Appropriate Land Uses in Rural Areas*

- ❖ Agricultural and equestrian uses
- ❖ Single family uses, primarily in the form of conservation subdivision design or large lot (e.g. fifteen acres lot size or greater) subdivisions
- ❖ Rural commercial uses such as commercial nurseries, feed and seed stores, farmers markets, farm implement sales and supply stores, and other farm support businesses
- ❖ Institutional uses, such as schools, churches, public safety facilities, and similar uses
- ❖ Parks and recreation uses



## *Hamlet*

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### *Background*

Small Hamlets provide a unique form of land use in Williamson County. Hamlets are typically communities with a small (if any) residential population and housing stock that was typically built in the early part of the 20th Century. Hamlets usually evolved at the intersections of either two roads or a road and a rail line. There are approximately a dozen Hamlets interspersed throughout the Rural Preservation Areas in Williamson County.

These “crossroads” communities typically have a historic place name and were often home to small businesses such as small grocery stores, feed stores, and institutions such as churches, post offices, lodges, elementary schools or community centers. The classic Hamlet in Williamson County is (or was) home to a small grouping of residences, one or two small businesses, and one or two institutional uses.

Hamlets are important to Williamson County in that they provide small but historic focal points within a rural landscape. As such, they contribute to a sense of rural community character that goes beyond the actual magnitude of their land uses and geographic area. For this reason, the preservation of the historic character of Hamlets is an important goal of this Plan. Further, Hamlets offer the ability to accommodate some, but not a great deal of new growth in the County. Small amounts of new residential, business, and institutional uses could be accommodated in and around existing Hamlets. However, the scale and magnitude of new growth and development within these Hamlets should continue the scale and magnitude of the Hamlets themselves. Too much new development centered around Hamlets will overwhelm them and result in the loss of their historic character and role in overall County development.

Hamlets can also be an important element in the heritage tourism aspects of County economic development by providing small scale restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and shops for visitors.

For the purpose of this Plan, the following Hamlets have been identified on the Land Use Plan: Arrington, Bending Chestnut, Bethesda, Boston, Burwood, Duplex, Fernvale, Flat Creek, Greenbrier, Harpeth, Kingfield, Kirkland, and Rudderville.

## *Vision*

The vision of Williamson County's Hamlets is to "preserve and enhance" them. The existing character of the Hamlets should be preserved through historic preservation programs and through the sensitive design of new development that maintains the Hamlet scale. The Hamlets should be enhanced with new investment that reinforces their historic character and scale.

## *Development Policies*

- ❖ Hamlets are desirable land use patterns that complement the Rural Areas. They can be expected to accommodate a minor share of the forecasted growth in Williamson County.
- ❖ When new development occurs, it should respect the existing pattern and scale of development.
- ❖ New development in a Hamlet should be "pedestrian friendly", with sidewalks unless they are demonstrated by an applicant to be impractical and not needed.
- ❖ New residential uses, non-residential uses and institutions are encouraged to locate in Hamlets, but only if they respect the scale and character of the Hamlet, and provide compatible density and intensity.
- ❖ Any existing historic character of Hamlets should be respected and preserved in new development. New development can be designed with modern amenities and features, , however, it should respect the scale, configuration, building orientation, density, pattern, materials, building relationship to street and general character of the existing Hamlet.
- ❖ While Hamlets can and should accommodate new growth to maintain their vitality, this growth should be limited so as not to overpower the scale of the Hamlet. While there is no precise amount of population that should be targeted, each Hamlet should be monitored as new development is proposed to ensure that its character is not compromised.
- ❖ Hamlets that grow beyond approximately 20 dwelling units, more than three businesses, or more than two institutional uses will be considered Villages and will be subject to the development policies associated with Villages.

- ❖ Hamlets should be linked to alternative transportation modes, such as pedestrian and bicycle trails, wherever feasible.
- ❖ The boundaries between Hamlets and surrounding Rural Areas should be clear and distinct. Hamlets should continue to be small as well as a definable focal point of minor activity. Hamlets should accomplish this without dominating the rural landscape.

## *Appropriate Land Uses*

- ❖ Detached and attached residential
- ❖ Institutional
- ❖ Small scale commercial
- ❖ Restaurants
- ❖ Bed and Breakfasts and Inns
- ❖ Small scale agricultural businesses

## *Village*

### *Background*

Williamson County is fortunate to be home to several areas that have been identified as Villages in this Plan. Villages are similar to Hamlets in some ways, except that they occur at a larger scale, with more diverse land uses, and more complicated planning issues. Like Hamlets, Villages have historic roots and development patterns that are characteristic of the early 20th Century and in some instances, earlier. Like Hamlets, Villages typically evolved because of their geographic location to transportation routes.

For the purpose of this Plan, the following four Villages are identified on the Land Use Map:

- ❖ Leiper's Fork
- ❖ Grassland
- ❖ Triune
- ❖ College Grove

As contrasted with Hamlets, Villages are larger both in terms of numbers of businesses as well as numbers of residential dwelling units. Most of the Villages are not provided with urban services and are served with older septic systems. The Village of Grassland is an exception in that it is partially provided with sanitary sewer services. However, in the case of all Villages, their infrastructure is not designed to support substantial additional growth; if they are going to have

growth beyond their current levels, the provision of adequate public facilities, including adequate sewage treatment, must be addressed.

The Villages typically have a pedestrian friendly environment with a "small town" feel that is valued not only by the people who live in the Villages but also by other County residents who see the Villages as being an important definition of the overall character of the community.

Some of the Villages have been "rediscovered" and are experiencing substantial reinvestment. Leiper's Fork is an example of a Village that has quickly gone from being largely overlooked to being the subject of tremendous interest and investment, resulting in it becoming a true activity center for the western half of the County. While this creates vibrancy in the area, it can also attract attention and interest in more growth and change before the Village is able to adequately plan for that change.

The challenge for the Villages, as they are receiving reinvestment and being subjected to development pressures, is to maintain and preserve their historic and small town character.

## ***Vision***

The vision for the Villages is to preserve and protect their unique historic and small town character. They are and will continue to be activity centers and focal points within the Rural Preservation Areas. Limited new growth and development will occur only as part of individual Village plans designed to preserve and protect the unique character of each Village. These Special Area Plans will be developed as the need arises.

## ***Development Policies***

- ❖ As contrasted with Hamlets, new growth and development in or around Villages should occur only pursuant to a Special Area Plan for the Village that identifies appropriate land uses, development standards, design guidelines, and adequate public facility requirements. The policies in this section apply to all Villages, but are to be supplemented with Special Area Plan policies unique to each Village, with development review procedures designed to ensure compliance with applicable Special Area Plan standards and policies.
- ❖ As part of each Special Area Plan, the geographic boundaries of any existing Crossroad Center Zoning District and others should

be examined to ensure it is consistent with the Village's Special Area Plan.

- ❖ New development in and around Villages should respect their existing character. It should help maintain the "small town" feel that the Villages strive to maintain. It is important to recognize that there are ultimate limits to development in and around Villages, even when new development is designed well and with adequate provision of public services. The historic scale of Williamson County's Villages is such that beyond a certain size (population, number of new dwelling units, new businesses, and distance from center), the unique character of the Village will be lost. The Special Area Plans will define those ultimate size parameters for each Village.
- ❖ The street systems in Villages should have multiple interconnections. This allows multiple opportunities for people to walk to local destinations by a variety of routes. Streets should be designed for slower speeds to allow for mixing of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- ❖ There should be a short distance to amenities; sites should be designated for parks, schools, churches, stores, and other public gathering places.
- ❖ The density of Villages should generally reflect established patterns and densities.
- ❖ Mixed housing types can be permitted, including some alternative accessory housing options.
- ❖ Homes should be designed to relate to the street. The fronts of buildings should be oriented to the street, and the progression of public to private characteristics of traditional neighborhoods (street-sidewalk-front yard-front porch) should be preserved.
- ❖ New development should recognize the existing pattern of Villages and should be an unobtrusive way for the Villages to grow while still maintaining their character.
- ❖ New development should fit into the existing pattern and street grid.

## *Appropriate Land Uses*

- ❖ Detached and attached residential
- ❖ Institutional
- ❖ Small scale commercial
- ❖ Restaurants
- ❖ Bed and Breakfasts and Inns
- ❖ Small scale agricultural and agricultural support businesses

## 840 Center

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### *Background*

The construction of State Route 840 through Williamson County offers unique planning challenges and opportunities. Any place where a major metropolitan regional transportation system intersects with local roads will undoubtedly create the potential for growth pressures and opportunities. However, the mere presence of an interchange does not in and of itself mean that growth is appropriate. For this reason, this Plan identifies 840 Centers as a potential location of limited new growth opportunities.

Unlike Hamlets and Villages which involve potential for change around existing historic areas, the 840 Centers offer opportunities for new growth and development. In some ways the 840 Centers provide an opportunity to develop a new form of development that is analogous to the historic Villages, albeit one that is starting from scratch.

As a starting point, this Plan recommends only one area as an 840 Center – the area located within the existing Planned Growth Area 5.

### *Vision*

The 840 Center will include new residential growth opportunities, along with a mix of local serving businesses. It will provide residential opportunities for people who desire easy access to this important regional transportation facility. Residential and business uses will meet high standards for development quality including both functional standards such as traffic circulation, access management, storm water management and other adequate public facilities requirements, as well as aesthetic standards related to quality of design and site layout.

### *Development Policies*

- ❖ The 840 Centers are valuable resources in the County and should be viewed as key symbolic entrances into the community.
- ❖ A single 840 Center is identified as part of this Plan: Triune area within current Planned Growth Area (PGA) 5. Other interchanges along 840 are not identified for 840 Centers at this time. This Plan recommends a strategy of focusing activity in one Center where it can be most efficiently planned relative to public services. PGA 5 has long been the planned location for such growth.

- ❖ In the future, this Plan may be amended to identify other interchange areas to be 840 Centers, but only after demonstration of adequate provisions for public services and facilities, and according to a Special Area Plan for the area. In the meantime, those other interchanges will not accommodate new growth beyond that identified in the Rural Preservation Areas.
- ❖ New growth in the recommended 840 Center will be targeted to achieve a balance of residential and locally serving businesses. Of the residential, no more than 20% should be attached housing. Compatible attached housing, including senior housing, is appropriate within the 840 Center as long as it does not exceed 20% of the number of units in the area, particularly when such uses are used as a land use transition.
- ❖ In the case of PGA 5, it will be important to recognize that this is also the location of one of the Villages recognized in this Plan. For this reason, the Village policies will also be applicable to the extent that new growth affects the Triune Village.
- ❖ New development in 840 Centers will be subject to flexible but predictable compatibility standards related to site planning, building design and materials, landscaping, and other features creating potential land use impacts.
- ❖ Signage in 840 Center Areas should be limited and integrated into an overall site-planning theme. Billboards will be prohibited.
- ❖ Special attention should be paid to architectural quality. Overall architectural themes should be developed for each 840 Center that is ultimately targeted for development.
- ❖ Traffic circulation and access should be carefully planned and managed so that it operates as a coordinated circulation system.
- ❖ Alternative sewage technology systems are appropriate only when they are part of a comprehensive approach to the provision of sewer service to the area. The use of alternative sewage technology is not appropriate on a piecemeal property - by - property basis.

### *Appropriate Land Uses*

- ❖ Detached and attached residential
- ❖ Neighborhood commercial
- ❖ Institutional

## *Suburban Infill and Conservation*

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### *Background*

There are limited areas within the Williamson County Comprehensive Plan targeted for growth and development with a suburban pattern with a focus on infill. These include the current Plan Growth Areas 1, 2, and 3, which, together, form a single cluster of Suburban Infill and Conservation land uses in the northern area of the County. This area is identified as such largely because it has already developed with a Suburban Infill and Conservation character. It also has unique circumstances associated with it relative to its sewage treatment facilities and its proximity to regional growth forces.



While the pattern of development in the area has already been established as a Suburban Infill and Conservation pattern, there are still substantial planning issues remaining. First, the remaining undeveloped land is largely fragmented, creating incremental infill challenges. Much of the remaining undeveloped land is constrained with either floodplain or steep slopes. The easily developable land has already been developed, leaving the more difficult and challenging land remaining.

There are actually three different sewer providers in the area. PGAs 1 and 2 include systems with point discharges into the Harpeth River watershed, creating serious constraints to future capacity. PGA 3 is served by the Harpeth Valley Utility District, which does have capacity for additional growth and development. In this case, the zoning and natural resources limit development in the area, not the sanitary sewer.

The primary challenges in this area involve accommodating continued development pressures while protecting sensitive environmental features and providing safe and adequate public facilities.

## *Vision*

The vision for the Suburban Infill and Conservation area is to ensure that as it continues to develop that it does so with compatible land uses and densities. This continued development will be done in such a way that natural resources are preserved and protected and adequate public facilities are provided.

## *Development Policies*

The Suburban Infill and Conservation Areas will be largely residential. Any supporting non-residential uses will occur in the Grassland Village.

- ❖ High quality development should be encouraged through improved site plan and design review standards, particularly related to landscaping, signs, building design and orientation, and parking lot design in commercial land uses.
- ❖ The Grassland Village should be subject to a special area plan, as further recommended in the implementation chapter.
- ❖ Pedestrian facilities should be included in all new developments, unless circumstances make this unrealistic. In particular, improved connections between key destination areas should be developed. Examples of this connectivity are between residential and commercial areas, and between residential, parks and school areas.

- ❖ High value should be placed on quality open space as part of suburban development. Open spaces should not be designated as an afterthought based simply on land that is left over in the site plan review process, but rather used as an integrated part of the development.
- ❖ Environmental quality standards should continue to be incorporated in the development review process, particularly related to runoff, stream protection, floodplains, and tree and ridgeline protection.
- ❖ New development should be coordinated and timed relative to infrastructure. Infrastructure, particularly sewer and water service, should be available concurrently with new development.
- ❖ Alternative sewage technology systems are appropriate only when they are part of a comprehensive approach to the provision of sewer service to the area. The use of alternative sewage technology is not appropriate on a piecemeal property - by - property basis.
- ❖ New infrastructure, especially roads, should be planned to be adequate for both existing and planned growth. Level of service standards should be developed to ensure that adequate public facilities are provided in both the short term and long term.
- ❖ Suburban residential uses should emphasize more "connectivity" between subdivisions, and avoid creating isolated islands of development.
- ❖ Other uses, such as parks, schools, churches, and senior housing, should be considered as appropriate ancillary uses when part of an integrated site design and when designed to minimize negative impacts.
- ❖ Land use regulations should be flexible in terms of density. While overall density limits (gross density) should be established, the ability to construct on smaller lots while preserving open space and environmental features (net density) should be allowed as part of a site plan review process with quality based guidelines.
- ❖ Subdivisions should be designed with regard to pedestrian scale, particularly in relation to street width, alignment, and designed vehicular speed.

### *Appropriate Land Uses*

- ❖ Detached and attached residential
- ❖ Senior housing
- ❖ Institutional

# *Municipal Growth Areas*

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## *Background*

The Municipal Growth Areas are those lands that surround Williamson County's cities and are identified for growth through the system of Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) mandated by Tennessee Public Chapter 1101. They are the areas where the bulk of the future growth and development is intended to occur in the County, in accordance with the plans of each individual community.

This Plan embraces a land use pattern that preserves rural character with an environmental and historic preservation focus. It encourages growth to occur in and around the existing communities that are better able to provide urban or suburban level services and facilities, especially related to sanitary sewer and roads. This Plan calls for a compact form of growth with rural low densities around focused growth areas, rather than suburban and rural sprawl. The role of the Municipal Growth Areas is critical to the success of this Plan.

The issues associated with implementing this form of land use have to do primarily with intergovernmental coordination. On the one hand, this Plan accepts the land use plans for the growth areas around municipalities, as embodied in their own plans for the Urban Growth Boundaries. It views those plans as a critical and complementary ingredient in the overall County land use strategy. On the other hand, until and unless those growth areas are annexed to a city, they remain under County planning and zoning jurisdiction. Further, if property in one of the municipal growth areas develops at a low density under County zoning, with rural infrastructure (such as septic or alternative sewer systems), it is not likely to be annexed in the future. In fact, low density development in an identified growth area represents an underutilization of land, which can be inefficient from an infrastructure perspective and result in other portions of the County feeling the pressures of growth.

The primary challenge in these Municipal Growth Areas involves developing policies as to how this land should be addressed from a planning and zoning perspective during the time it remains under County zoning jurisdiction, which could be many years in some cases.

## *Vision*

The vision for the Municipal Growth Areas is for it to remain largely undeveloped until such time as it is annexed into a city and developed under their system of planning and land use regulation. For those property owners who desire to develop their land prior to a city being prepared to annex it, the County and the respective city will coordinate the review of the development to address issues of multi-jurisdictional impacts with the intent that the land will ultimately be annexed into the city.

## *Development Policies*

The Municipal Growth Areas will be coterminous with the Urban Growth Boundaries under Tennessee Public Chapter 1101 at the time of this plan adoption. In the event of a change in Urban Growth Boundaries, this Plan will be amended to address the land use impacts associated with the change.

It is the policy of this Plan that the Municipal Growth Areas should be developed in the respective cities under their land use plans. Developers will be encouraged to work with the municipalities during the development-planning phase bearing in mind that annexation will occur.

While still under the County's jurisdiction, these areas will be subject to the policies for the Rural Areas identified earlier in this chapter.

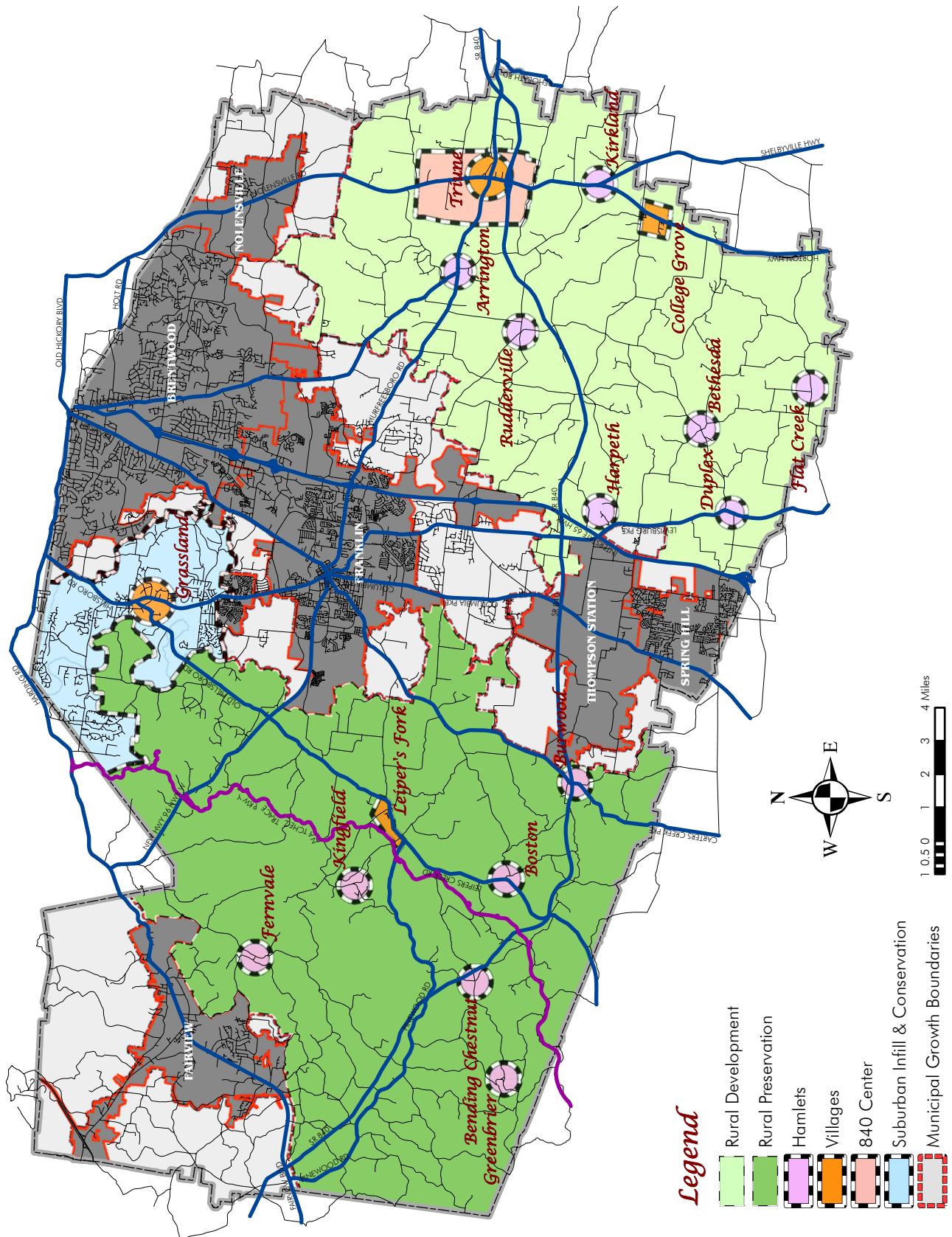
Alternative non-municipal sanitary sewer systems are discouraged. Development should occur in accordance with the municipalities' sanitary sewer plans.

The County will work with municipalities to develop intergovernmental agreements for additional coordinating policies relative to the development review in those areas

## *Appropriate Land Uses*

- ❖ Agricultural and equestrian uses
- ❖ Single family houses on existing parcels
- ❖ Uses permitted under municipal land use plans when annexed into a city

# Williamson County, Tennessee LAND USE ELEMENT MAP



# Chapter 5

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### *Introduction*

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Chapter 5 builds on the goals and objectives in this Comprehensive Plan, “the Plan,” and presents a “road map” of specific actions Williamson County should take to achieve the Plan’s land use vision for the future. The strategies are organized around five “core” Plan elements or themes:

- ❖ Land Use Patterns;
- ❖ Coordinating the Availability of Public Facilities with Development;
- ❖ Open Space Protection;
- ❖ Natural Resource Protection; and
- ❖ Historic/Cultural Resource Protection.

In the summary below, the Plan objectives are shown under each core element or theme, followed by a summary list of the general strategies recommended to achieve the objectives. The detailed strategies and implementation actions are described in each section.

The implementation strategies include regulatory and non-regulatory actions, ranging from revisions to the Williamson County Zoning Ordinance to funding initiatives for infrastructure and open space lands, to focused public education efforts. Specific strategies intended to implement one element of the Plan often perform “double-duty” in advancing the Plan’s objectives under a different element of the Plan. In addition, the strategies purposefully complement each other – the implementation of one strategy often supports other strategies.

Each of the implementing strategies is described in more detail in the remainder of this Chapter.

#### Land Use Patterns.

- ❖ **Objective:** Encourage Compact Growth in Suburban Infill and Conservation Areas and in Municipal Growth Areas (MGAs).

Strategy: Maintain suburban development character within the Planned Growth Areas 1, 2, and 3.

Strategy: Encourage greater coordination between the County and Cities regarding land uses, zoning, and development policies in Municipal Growth Areas while the land is still under the County’s zoning jurisdiction.

Strategy: Improve the quality of development in suburban and urban areas.

❖ **Objective:** Maintain Rural Character in Rural Areas.

Strategy: Ensure densities in the Rural Areas are consistent with rural character, and in instances where single-family residential development occurs it is consistent with the form and densities needed to support rural character.

Strategy: Ensure land uses and activities in the Rural Areas will enhance the rural economy and preserve rural character.

Strategy: Allow a broader array of temporary rural support uses by right in Rural Areas.

Strategy: Educate and assist landowners about their development options in Rural Areas.

Strategy: Broaden hillside standards to reflect the community's aesthetic and character-based interests in protecting hillsides and ridgetops.

Strategy: Adopt view shed protection standards along the County's key historic roads.

Strategy: Preserve the character and integrity of existing Villages through the creation of specific plans and tailored development and design standards in a new Rural Village Zoning District.

Strategy: Enhance the regulatory protection of existing Hamlets through creation of a new Hamlet Zoning District.

Strategy: Develop a specific set of actions to address the use of alternative sewer systems in Rural Areas.

**Coordinating the Availability of Public Facilities with Development.**

❖ **Objective:** Coordinating the Provision of Public Facilities with Growth.

Strategy: Update the major thoroughfare plan, based on the Plan, so it provides infrastructure consistent with the land use patterns and densities provided in the Plan.

Strategy: Prepare Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) for transportation facilities and park facilities that provide

infrastructure consistent with the land use patterns and densities provided in the Plan.

Strategy: Establish policies that only allow new development where there will be adequate transportation, potable water, wastewater, and park facility capacity to serve the development.

❖ **Objective:** Paying for Growth.

Strategy: Establish a multi-dimensional strategy by which the transportation facilities and park facilities needed to accommodate new growth and development are funded.

**Open Space Protection.**

❖ **Objective:** Plan for Open Space.

Strategy: Prepare an Open Space Plan for the County that coordinates existing policies and programs for open space preservation and links conservation and open space lands.

Strategy: Explore the establishment of dedicated funding sources for open space lands.

❖ **Objective:** Preservation of Open Space in the Rural Area.

Strategy: Preserve open space in the Rural Area through zoning and land use controls.

❖ **Objective:** Preserve Open Space in the Urban and Suburban Areas.

Strategy: Preserve open space in the municipal growth areas through zoning and land use controls.

Strategy: Preserve open space in the suburban areas through zoning and land use controls.

**Natural Resource Protection.**

❖ **Objective:** Protect Natural Resources Throughout the County.

Strategy: Conserve and protect natural resources through enhanced zoning and land use controls.

Strategy: Conserve and protect natural resources through cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders.

Strategy: Develop other non-regulatory programs for natural resource conservation and protection.

### Historic/Cultural Resource Protection.

❖ **Objective:** Protect Historic and Cultural Resources Throughout the County.

Strategy: Approach historic and cultural resource protection comprehensively.

Strategy: Conserve and protect historic/cultural resources through enhanced zoning and land use controls.

## *Land Use Patterns*

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### ***Encourage Compact Growth in Suburban Infill and Conservation Areas and in the Municipal Growth Areas (MGAs)***

One of the overriding goals of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage new development in the unincorporated County within the Planned Growth Areas (PGAs) and the Municipal Growth Areas (MGAs) around the cities at suburban and urban densities. This issue is particularly challenging today within the MGAs due to the absence of a consistent and coordinated land use and infrastructure policy, shared by the County and the municipalities, for handling development within these areas.

A second important Plan goal is to ensure the quality of both suburban and urban development that occurs is improved, in terms of both form and aesthetics.

Another important Plan goal is to provide a framework that allows opportunities for new high-quality residential, office, and retail development that is suburban in character, and consistent with historical development patterns, at the 840 interchange at Triune within PGA 5. The quality framework created should include functional standards to address traffic circulation, access management, stormwater management, and other public facility requirements, as well as aesthetic standards related to quality of

design and site layout. The framework should also be designed so that it can be used by the County at other appropriate 840 Centers (interchanges) in the future, as appropriate. Establishment of any additional 840 Centers would require this Plan to be amended.

At present, most lands within the Suburban Infill and Conservation Areas and PGA 5 are classified Suburban Estate (SE) in the Zoning Ordinance.<sup>1</sup> The SE Zoning District allows a maximum density of one dwelling unit for each one acre, subject to possible reductions to protect on-site natural resources and to account for limited transportation system capacity. The SE Zoning District allows single-family residential development as the primary use. Only limited commercial uses are allowed, and restaurants and hotels are prohibited. A standard single-family development is not required to set aside any open space, except under Resource Conservation Development standards, where single-family development must set aside a minimum of 30 percent of the land area as open space to protect on-site resources. Under the Planned Resource Conservation Development standards, in exchange for flexibility in lot sizes, single-family development must set aside a minimum of 50 percent of the land area as open space reserved to protect resources.

Currently, the large majority of lands in the unincorporated areas of the MGAs are also classified SE. The balance of lands within the MGAs are classified either Neighborhood Conservation (NC) or Suburban (S). As is discussed above, the SE Zoning District allows primarily single-family residential development at a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit for each one (1) acre. The NC Zoning District is intended to preserve the character of stable and fixed neighborhoods and development in existence at the time of adoption of the Zoning Ordinance in 1988 to ensure these neighborhoods and the development do not become nonconforming. The S Zoning District is intended to provide for moderate intensity residential, commercial, office, and industrial development served by wastewater treatment facilities. Single family development is allowed by right at a maximum density of up to three (3) dwelling units for each one (1) acre. Multi-family residential development is also allowed as a conditional use.<sup>2</sup> In addition, office, heavy retail/services, restaurants, and hotels are allowed by right, and shopping centers, light industrial uses, and mixed use developments are allowed as a conditional use.

To achieve high quality compact development within the County's designated growth areas (i.e., the PGAs and the MGAs), the following implementation strategies are recommended:

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<sup>1</sup> A small portion of the lands are classified Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Zoning District, which is intended to preserve the character of stable and fixed neighborhoods and development in existence at the time of adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 1988, and to ensure these neighborhoods and this development does not become nonconforming.

<sup>2</sup> A conditional use must be applied for and reviewed and approved, approved with conditions, or disapproved at a public hearing by the Planning Commission.

**Encourage Greater Coordination of Land Use, Zoning, and Development Policies in Municipal Growth Areas Between the County and Municipalities.**

- ❖ Seek consensus with the cities on permitted uses, development intensity, and provision of infrastructure within the MGAs. To achieve better coordination of land use and infrastructure policy between unincorporated lands and city lands within the MGAs, within 12 months of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the County will meet with representatives of each of the cities in an effort to reach agreement on coordinated land use and infrastructure policies (in particular those related to transportation, wastewater, and potable water) within the respective MGAs. The optimum goal should be:
  - ◆ Agreement between the County and each of the individual cities that unincorporated lands within the MGAs only be developed at urban and suburban densities if and when they are annexed into the cities so that city infrastructure can be applied to the development; and
  - ◆ The cities take primary responsibility for setting policy, planning for, and funding urban-level infrastructure within the MGAs.

**Develop a Special Area Plan and Subsequent New Zoning District(s) for the 840 Center at Triune.**

- ❖ Within 12 months of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, a Special Area Plan will be completed for the 840 Center at Triune within PGA 5. Its intended purpose will be to provide for moderate intensity, high-quality residential, office, and commercial development that is consistent with historical development patterns, and served by wastewater treatment facilities. The Special Area Plan will define the specific boundaries of the 840 Center and will include detailed recommendations regarding desired land use patterns as well as the appropriate scale, intensity and design of future development within this area. In concert with the Special Area Plan or within 6 months of its adoption, text amendments will be adopted in the Zoning Ordinance creating a new 840 Center Zoning District(s) for the area. This Zoning District(s) will be designed to implement the vision, goals and objectives set forth in the Special Area Plan and should include standards related to community form as well as the design and layout of new residential, commercial, mixed use, and large retail development, consistent with historical development patterns. The 840 Center Zoning District(s) will be designed so it/they can be applied, with modifications as appropriate, to other 840 Centers the County determines are necessary in the future through amendments to the Plan and following the preparation and adoption of Special Area Plans for those areas.

**Develop a Special Area Plan and Tailored Development and Design Standards for the Grassland Village in PGA 2.**

As discussed more fully later in this chapter, within 4 years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the County will complete Special Area Plans for the four designated Villages, including the Grassland Village, within PGA 2. Following the adoption of the Special Area Plan, tailored development and design standards will be developed to reflect the Plan's findings and recommendations and to ensure a development form that is consistent with the character of the Village.

**Encourage Quality Infill Development in the Suburban Infill and Conservation Area.**

A large percentage of the land within the Suburban Infill and Conservation Area has been developed with a suburban land use pattern and character. This area should continue to develop in a manner consistent with the established land use pattern, with special emphasis on open space preservation and natural resource protection.

- ❖ Within 18 months of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to include a set of enhanced Community Design Standards that address issues unrelated to buildings, such as street design, internal street connectivity, external street connectivity, access to lots, block design, and open space preservation.
- ❖ Because the Suburban Infill and Conservation Area is currently served by a number of traditional sanitary sewer providers, alternative sewer systems should not be encouraged in this area unless they were part of a comprehensive strategy to serve the area.

## ***Maintain Rural Character in Rural Areas***

The Plan categorizes the majority of land in the County as “Rural Preservation” or “Rural Development”, with the primary distinction between the two being permissible density. The long-range goal for the Rural Areas is to maintain and encourage the predominantly agricultural, equestrian, and rural economic uses, interspersed with low-density, single-family residential uses that are consistent with the rural character of the area. It is important to recognize that single family residential uses are not expected to be the primary use in the Rural Areas. Instead, single family residential uses are intended to be secondary to uses that are consistent with a rural character – agricultural, equestrian, and rural economic uses. In addition, and to ensure when single-family residential development occurs it is consistent with the desired rural character of the area, single-family residential development must tread lightly on the rural landscape through development either on very large lots or development in a form that is consistent with the rural landscape – with significant amounts of open space and the maintenance of natural features on the site, supported by infrastructure that is consistent with the rural landscape (conservation subdivision principles).



In order to implement the Plan’s goals of maintaining rural character, the County will take the following actions:

### **Ensure Single-Family Residential Development Is Consistent With The Desired Rural Character.**

Within 18 months of adoption of the Plan, the Zoning Ordinance will be amended to address the form and character of single-family residential development in the following ways:

- ❖ **Update land use controls on lands currently zoned Rural (R) and Estate (E) to preserve the rural character.** Text amendments will be adopted that replace the Rural (R) and Estate (E) Zoning Districts with a single, new "Rural Preservation" District that implements the Plan's Rural Preservation Area development policies. Simultaneous zoning map amendments will be adopted that apply the new Rural Preservation District to all unincorporated lands within the R and E District (primarily the western portion of the County designated Rural Preservation Area). The single-family residential densities and related open space set-aside requirements for the new Rural Preservation District will take the following form:
  - ◆ The maximum single-family residential gross density allowed will be one (1) dwelling unit for each five (5) acres. Single-family development may occur through one of two development options. They are: (1) A conservation subdivision with a minimum 60 or 65 percent open space set-aside, where it is determined that a conservation subdivision will achieve rural or environmental preservation due to natural site constraints beyond the achieved through a conventional subdivision. The conservation subdivision provision will require maintenance of natural features on the site (within the set-aside area), and encourage the maintenance of rural activities and uses by allowing many of them to continue within the open space set-aside. (2) A traditional subdivision form subject to review and approval as a special exception and subject to modified lot width (e.g. 400') and setback (200') standards. These options are similar to the existing R and E zoning approach in terms of densities, but require options to ensure development form is more consistent with rural character.
- ❖ **Update land use controls in lands currently zoned Suburban Estate (SE) within the Rural Development Area.** Within 18 months of adoption of the Plan, the Zoning Ordinance will be amended to address the form and character of single-family residential development on lands currently zoned SE and located within the Rural Development Area (primarily the east portion of the County) in the following way:
  - ◆ All SE zoned lands within the Rural Development Areas would retain their current permitted range of allowed uses and a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit for each one (1) acre. However, the regulations would allow the developer an option to develop under a conservation subdivision option that allows lot variation.

The County will also explore the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). The PDR program is a program initiated by the County to purchase development rights on rural lands. The rural lands on which development rights are purchased are allowed to continue any on-going agricultural activities, but conservation easements are placed on the land to ensure residential or urban development cannot occur (See Appendix 2 for a description of a typical PDR program).

#### Ensure Land Uses and Activities in the Rural Areas Will Enhance the Rural Economy and Preserve Rural Character.

As discussed earlier in this section, preserving rural character means being proactive about what land uses and activities – permanent and temporary – should be allowed and prohibited in the Rural Area. To ensure this occurs, the Zoning Ordinance will be amended to accomplish three goals:

- ❖ Make it easy to develop uses that are fundamental to a vibrant rural economy and that are supportive of rural character;
- ❖ Make it more difficult to establish uses that have the potential to negatively affect the rural economy or character in some (but not all) cases; and
- ❖ Prohibit uses that are detrimental to a vibrant rural character.

To implement these goals, within 18 months of the adoption of the Plan, the Zoning Ordinance will be amended as follows:

- ❖ **Adopt a voluntary Agricultural Zoning District to support rural agricultural enterprises.** A new “Agricultural” Zoning District will be created to protect the long-term viability or feasibility of active agricultural enterprises in specific areas across Williamson County. This zone will allow very limited residential uses at very low densities, with an emphasis on encouraging agricultural and agricultural support uses without concern of creating potential compatibility conflicts.
  - ◆ The application of this new Agricultural district could be entirely voluntary, upon petition of a rural landowner. The zone should be available to all landowners in the Rural Area.
  - ◆ The Agricultural district should require a maximum residential density of one (1) dwelling unit for each thirty (30) acres to achieve its intent.

- ❖ **Allow a wide variety of basic agricultural and agricultural support uses in the Rural Area.** In the new Rural Preservation District, basic agriculture uses and agricultural support uses will be allowed by right subject to performance standards necessary to mitigate any potential for off-site, adverse impacts.
  - ◆ Basic agricultural uses include agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and equestrian activities.
  - ◆ Agricultural support uses are support businesses (repair, service, retail, and related uses) related to the basic agricultural uses and activities. The support businesses are further divided into those that are directly associated with an on-going basic agricultural activity, and located on the same property, versus a support business that is off-site. Off-site support businesses should be small-scale in nature, and may include such uses as farm product sales, farm machinery repair and leasing. Larger-scale support operations should be directed into the Villages and PGAs. In addition, demonstration farms and agricultural museums should be considered as legitimate off-site support businesses, since they support basic agriculture and tourism. Animal services (e.g., veterinary services and animal hospitals) are also considered agricultural support businesses.
  - ◆ As needed, performance standards will address potential external impacts as well as ensure the maintenance and preservation of the agricultural and rural character of the area. The types of potential impacts identified that might need to be addressed include: access/traffic, location of the use on the land (setbacks); the size/bulk of the use in relation to other uses; impact on rural character (e.g., height, visibility); and environmental impacts (such as noise and lighting).
- ❖ **Expand by right nonresidential service and tourism uses, subject to performance and location criteria.** Examples of such uses could include new equestrian centers and boarding facilities, event facilities, nurseries, conference centers, corporate retreats and training facilities, heritage and rural tourism destinations, farmer's markets, and bed and breakfasts.
- ❖ **Allow and encourage adaptive reuse of existing farm structures.** Such structures can be adapted for basic agriculture, support agriculture and small-scale on-site businesses.
- ❖ **Continue to allow basic public and institutional uses if they are compatible with neighboring uses.** New uses and expansions to existing institutional uses should continue to be allowed if the expansion is compatible with neighboring uses and the necessary infrastructure and supporting or ancillary activities can be provided cost effectively.

### Allow a Broader Array of Temporary Rural Support Uses By Right in Rural Areas.

Special events related to agricultural activities and tourism are common in rural areas. They include fairs, craft shows, art shows, winery events, battle reenactments, equestrian shows and events, festivals, rodeos, corporate receptions, mazes, and other related "agritainment." The County will encourage these events, since they are an important aspect of the rural and agri-tourism industry. At the same time the County will carefully evaluate special event uses to ensure any external impacts are substantially mitigated.

To address these concerns, within 18 months of adoption of the Plan, the County will analyze the Special Event Permit division of the Zoning Ordinance for the opportunity to broaden the types of Temporary Rural Support Uses Permitted. The new regulation, however, will be careful not to be too cumbersome, so as not to discourage such activities, which are important to rural character. The uses included in the regulation will be subject to the following provisions:

- ❖ The permit process will apply countywide to all special events held on private property and which reasonably may be expected to attract more than a specified number of persons at any one time, for example, 100 or more persons. Certain events and activities will be exempt, including:
  - ◆ Special events or activities occurring within, or upon the grounds of a private residence or farm, as long as it does not attract over the specified number of persons;
  - ◆ Any event officially sponsored by the County or the State; and
  - ◆ Any organized activities on sites typically intended and used for such activities, such as sporting events and tournaments at golf courses or playing fields; wedding services at reception halls or similar facilities; funeral services at funeral homes or cemeteries; and services, weddings, and funerals conducted at places of worship.
- ❖ The County will have authority to deny a Temporary Use Permit for a special event under prescribed standards if the proposed special event creates an unreasonable risk that harm may occur to property or persons; it may cause travel hazards or congestion; the location cannot reasonably accommodate the event; or it creates additional police, fire, trash removal, maintenance, or other public service demands that cannot be mitigated.
- ❖ In the approval of a Temporary Use Permit for a special event, the County will also be given authority to impose conditions necessary to minimize adverse impacts upon other property in the area as long as the condition relates to a situation created or aggravated

by the proposed special event use. The County will be authorized to require temporary parking facilities or require sanitary facilities and temporary medical facilities if, for example, the farm being used for a weekend festival, which is expected to attract 1,000 persons, has no parking or minimal parking, no sanitary facilities, and is far from medical facilities. Each special event shall be limited to a maximum duration of time, even though the regulation will provide for extensions of these limits upon written application and a finding that there will be no substantial adverse impact on surrounding property, public facilities and services.

#### Educate And Assist Landowners About Their Development Options in the Rural Areas.

To educate and assist rural landowners about the County's planning and regulatory program to support rural activities and development practices in the Rural Area, the County will investigate new assistance programs for rural landowners that focus, among other things, on assisting owners through the County development review process and on educating them about their options for long-term rural land preservation, conservation subdivision development, and local or state programs and incentives that assist on-going agricultural enterprises.

- ❖ One option is for the County to appoint a facilitator who works and assists applicants with the development permitting processes in the Rural Area. This person is generally a planning/zoning professional hired by the County. The Ombudsman is available to work with landowners in the Rural Area on a voluntary basis to answer questions about the Zoning Ordinance and the Plan, educate them about the development process, and assist potential development applicants in the preparation of applications. This concept is employed by several local governments and seems to work fairly well while also creating good will between the local government and rural landowners.
- ❖ Another option is an in-house permit expediter. This is a professional who does not prepare the application but can answer questions about standards and review processes and usher an application through the process to ensure there are no unexpected delays.
- ❖ The County will investigate other successful models of maintaining rural character and supporting rural landowners in the Rural Area.

#### Adopt family subdivision exemption

In order to ensure longtime residents in the Rural Area are not penalized by the County's initiative to maintain Williamson County rural character, when they want to pass down lands to children to

build homes in the Rural Area, consider the adoption of a family subdivision exemption for lands in the Rural Area, to the extent allowed by law. Generally what the provision would do is exempt the transfer of certain size parcels from long-time landowners to their children.

**Broaden Hillside Standards to Reflect the Community's Aesthetic and Character-Based Interests in Protecting Hillsides and Ridgetops.**

Currently, the County's hillside and ridgetop protection standards (Sections 7114, 7117, and 7118 of the Zoning Ordinance) are grounded primarily in the intent to prevent property damage due to inappropriately engineered or other unsafe development practices.

To further enhance hilltop and ridgetop protection standards, and to advance the public interest in preserving unspoiled vistas, the County will, within 18 months of the adoption of the Plan, broaden the hillside, steep slope and ridgetop standards in the Zoning Ordinance to include specific development and design standards to lessen the negative aesthetic impacts hillside development in the new Rural Preservation Zoning District can have on rural character. Standards should be more vigorous regarding building setbacks from the hill top or ridgeline, building height, amount of woodland clearing permitted, and extent of grading and benching permitted for principal and accessory structures as well as private access roads.

**Adopt View Shed Protection Standards along the County's Key Historic Roads.**

To assist in the maintenance and preservation of important rural images in the Rural Area along road corridors, the County will explore the possibility of adopting view shed protection standards along key historic roads to maintain their natural and historic integrity.

The actual corridors subject to protection should be identified through a study of historic corridors that ranks those corridors based on historic integrity, view shed characteristics, prevailing land use patterns, development pressure and others. The County will work with municipalities and utilities to develop "best conservation practice" guidelines for the preservation of scenic corridors. In any case, the National Park Natchez Trace Parkway should be given high priority in corridor protection efforts.

In addition, County planning staff will coordinate efforts with the appropriate County and other government offices to promote context sensitive road design, particularly in the Rural Area.

**Preserve the Character and Integrity of Existing Villages through the Creation of Specific Area Plans And Tailored Development and Design Standards in a New “Village Zoning District.”**

The Plan identifies four Villages for preservation: Leiper’s Fork, Grassland, Triune and College Grove. These four Villages are small historic settlements that serve as social and economic centers. The Plan recognizes it is important to maintain and protect the viability and sense of place exhibited by these Villages, as well as their traditional development patterns and uses because they:

- ❖ Support the local economy by providing compact locations for non-agriculturally-related commercial and service uses and general community-serving uses;
- ❖ Support the tourism industry by providing compact locations for tourist accommodation and related service and retail uses; and
- ❖ Provide a sense of history and support the general rural character and traditions of the surrounding area through their architectural styles and development form.

Each Village has its own unique character, mix of uses, and vision for the future. Although fairly generic, the current Community Crossroads (“CC”) District validates and promotes the continuance of existing rural crossroads development but does not tailor its use, bulk, and development standards to promote residents’ vision for each Village and preserve each Village’s unique character. Further, many of the CC Districts are overly large relative to the Villages to which they are applied. To address this, the County will take the following actions:

- ❖ **Adopt specific area plans for each designated Village.** Within four (4) years after adoption of the Plan, the County will complete specific area plans for each of the four designated Villages. One Village Plan will be completed each year. The specific area plans will focus on defining and framing the distinguishing components of each Village, including land use mix, street systems, natural features, density/intensity of existing development, scale and form of development. Each specific area plan will focus primarily on preserving each Village’s defining characteristics, but should also creatively seek opportunities for invigorating the economic and social vitality of these important rural places and assuring a variety of housing choices for rural County residents.
- ❖ **Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new “Rural Village” Zoning District.** Within 6 months of the adoption of the first Village Plan, the County will create a new “Village” Zoning District that will be mapped to replace the current CC Zoning District for each of the four designated Villages. This schedule would

necessitate that the Rural Village Zoning District be prepared as part of the Zoning Ordinance Update described above (thus, the Village Zoning District would be approved within 6 months of approval of the first Village Plan, concurrent with adoption of a new zoning ordinance). This timeframe should give the County adequate time to meet and consult with Village residents and other interested stakeholders about the intent and content of the new Rural Village Zoning District, and how the design and development standards might be varied as applied to each Village. At a minimum, the new Village District will contain the following provisions:

- ◆ The district will allow a mix of small-scale commercial, industrial (limited to the production of goods, such as furniture, with hand tools only), and institutional development, along with more intense tourist accommodation uses and services, and a variety of residential housing types.
- ◆ To ensure the existing character of each Village is maintained as infill and new development occurs, contextual compatibility and neighborhood development standards will apply to each district.
- ◆ The contextual compatibility standards will override the general development standards for new development, and require conformance with setback, yard and height requirements established by “average setbacks” and heights for all buildings on the same side of the street within a certain distance or within the block face.
- ◆ Neighborhood development standards will be prepared to reinforce the existing development patterns in the Villages to the greatest extent practicable through street system/connectivity standards, requirements for variation of lot and building sizes, civic and open space standards, and standards for street trees and garage locations.
- ◆ As the specific area plans are completed for each Village, the County will amend the Village District to modify the design and development standards applicable to each Village to reflect the Plan’s findings and recommendations, and to ensure a tailored development form most consistent with the traditional development patterns of each Village.

#### Enhance Regulatory Protection of Existing Hamlets Through Creation of a New “Hamlet” Zoning District.

The Plan identifies the following 13 Hamlets, all located within the Plan’s designated Rural Areas, for protection and preservation:

❖ Arrington	❖ Farnvale
❖ Bending	❖ Flat Creek
	❖ Greenbrier
❖ Chestnut	
❖ Bethesda	❖ Harpeth
❖ Boston	❖ Kingfield
❖ Burwood	❖ Kirkland
❖ Duplex	❖ Rudderville

These Hamlets are very small historic settlements (smaller than Plan-designated Villages), typically located at rural crossroads, which serve as social and economic centers. Hamlets may, or may not, include a small residential population, typically in a compact grouping of historic homes. Most Hamlets are, or were, home to small businesses such as small grocery stores, feed stores, and institutions such as churches, post offices, lodges, elementary schools or community centers. The Plan recognizes it is important to preserve and enhance the viability and sense of place exhibited by these Hamlets, as well as their traditional development patterns and uses because they:

- ❖ Provide a sense of history and support the general rural character and traditions of the surrounding rural area through their historic character and form;
- ❖ Support the heritage tourism industry in Williamson County by providing compact locations for small-scale tourist accommodations, such as bed and breakfast inns, and related service and retail uses; and
- ❖ Provide an alternative, compact place to accommodate a limited portion of the future residential and commercial growth planned for the Rural Areas.

Each Hamlet has its own unique character and mix of uses. Although fairly generic, the current Community Crossroads ("CC") District validates and promotes the continuance of existing rural crossroads development but does not tailor its use, bulk, and development standards to promote the Plan's vision for preserving and enhancing the Hamlets and their unique characters. Further, many of the CC Districts are overly large relative to the Hamlets to which they are applied. To address this, the County will take the following actions:

- ❖ **Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new "Hamlet" Zoning District.** Within 18 months of the adoption of the Plan, the County will create a new "Hamlet" Zoning District that will be mapped to replace the current CC Zoning District for the 11 identified Hamlets. This timeframe should give the County adequate time to meet and consult with current residents, business owners, and other interested stakeholders about the intent and content of the new Hamlet Zoning District, and how design and development standards might be tailored to accommodate the Plan's vision and goals for the Hamlets. At a minimum, the new Hamlet Zoning District should contain the following provisions:
  - ◆ The district will allow a mix of small-scale commercial and institutional/civic development, along with small-scale tourist accommodation uses such as small lodges and bed and breakfast

inns, as well as single-family detached and attached residential housing types.

- ◆ To ensure the existing character of each Hamlet is maintained as infill and new development occurs, contextual compatibility and neighborhood development standards will apply to each district.
- ◆ The contextual compatibility standards will override the general development standards for new development, and require conformance with setback, yard and height requirements established by “average setbacks” and heights for all buildings on the same side of the street within a certain distance or within the block face.
- ◆ Neighborhood development standards will be prepared to reinforce the existing development patterns in the Hamlets to the greatest extent practicable through street and sidewalk standards, pedestrian connectivity standards, building orientation standards, open space standards, and standards for street trees and residential garage locations.
- ◆ In order to assure the historic character and scale of the County’s Hamlets, the new district should contain maximum thresholds for overall Hamlet size, mix of uses, and densities, beyond which the new Village Zoning District standards would apply instead of the Hamlet standards.
- ◆ If a specific area plan is completed for a Hamlet, the County will amend the Hamlet Zoning District to modify the design and development standards applicable to that specific Hamlet to reflect the Plan’s findings and recommendations, and to ensure a tailored development form most consistent with the traditional development patterns the Hamlet.
- ❖ **Consider Historic District designation for specific Hamlets, as desired.** The County will encourage local Hamlet residents, businesses, and other County stakeholders to explore historic district or historic building designations for some or all of the Plan-designated Hamlets, or specific buildings within the Hamlets. The County will provide technical and planning resources and assistance as requested by residents and advocates.

#### Develop Strategies to Address the Use of Alternative Sewer Systems in Rural Areas.

Within 12 months of the Plan’s adoption, the County will conduct additional evaluation and develop a specific set of action strategies to address the growing use of alternative sewer systems. The Plan recognizes the proliferation of alternative sewer systems could potentially result in sprawl patterns of ex-urban development that are clearly not consistent with the Plan’s goals and objectives. This

strategy should reflect the policy of this Plan to utilize alternative systems only as part of a comprehensive strategy and to discourage their use in a piecemeal, patchwork manner. Options the County will consider for possible action consistent with this Plan's vision and goals include:

- ❖ Strengthening current County standards for the construction and design of alternative sewer systems.
- ❖ Consider County creation of a Public Works Department that declares its intent to provide wastewater treatment throughout the unincorporated area.
- ❖ Alternately, work with the existing Williamson County Water and Wastewater Authority to have the Authority declare its intent to provide wastewater treatment throughout the unincorporated area.
- ❖ Permit the use of alternative treatment systems in the Rural Area only under the following limited conditions:
  - ◆ In conservation subdivision developments that are consistent with Plan goals and objectives;
  - ◆ For replacement of existing failed wastewater treatment systems; and
  - ◆ For use in the Villages where development is consistent with Plan goals and approved Special Area Plans and where they can be provided as part of a comprehensive solution to sanitary sewer service.

## *Coordinating the Availability of Public Facilities with Growth*

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### *Coordinating the Provision of Public Facilities with Growth*

One of the goals of the Plan is to coordinate the Plan's land use and infrastructure policies by recognizing there is a difference in the type and level of infrastructure needed to support development in the Rural Area and the suburban and urban areas of the County (infrastructure needs are much more limited in the Rural Area). Once this distinction is established and incorporated in local plans, the County will coordinate the provision of public facilities with new development.

To address these goals, the County will focus its efforts on the following planning, regulatory, and funding actions:

**Update Major Thoroughfare Plan so It Provides Infrastructure Consistent with The Land Use Patterns and Densities Provided in the Plan.**

Within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, update the Major Thoroughfare Plan, based on the land use and growth estimates in the updated Plan. The Major Thoroughfare Plan will serve as the basis for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) discussed below. It should recognize the difference between the nature and character of roads in the Rural Area and the suburban and urban areas of the County. It should also balance the demands of designing roads for safety and efficiency with the importance of preserving the historic, rural, and scenic character of the Rural Area. Principles of context sensitive design should be incorporated into the Major Thoroughfare Plan. The Major Thoroughfare Plan will include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- ❖ Establishment of a Level of Service (LOS) standard that distinguishes between the Rural Area and the suburban and urban areas of the County;
- ❖ Identification of the existing conditions of the major thoroughfare system and, based on the established LOS standards, identification of deficiencies in service conditions (if they exist) and the costs to correct the deficiencies;
- ❖ Development of a travel demand model to estimate the demand future growth and development will have on the transportation system;
- ❖ Estimates of the capital improvement needs to accommodate new growth and development and their costs over a 5 and 20-year planning horizon;
- ❖ Identification of important historic, environmental, and scenic considerations to be addressed in the road design and development review process;
- ❖ Recommendations for administrative mechanisms to improve communications and collaboration among various County departments in the design of road improvements to ensure better coordination of road planning and land use planning; and
- ❖ Preparation of a list of capital improvements to be provided by government (local, state and federal) to accommodate new development over the 20-year planning horizon and their costs.

**Prepare Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) for Transportation Facilities and Park Facilities That Provide Infrastructure Consistent with the Land Use Patterns and Densities Provided in the Plan.**

Within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, the County will prepare Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) for the following Public Facilities:<sup>3</sup>

- ❖ Transportation facilities; and
- ❖ Park facilities.

The CIPs will include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- ❖ Establishment of a Level of Service (LOS) standard that gives the expectation of having rural services (and roads) in the Rural Area;
- ❖ Establishment of a LOS standard that gives the expectation of having higher level of services when in the suburban and urban areas of the County;
- ❖ Identification of the existing conditions of the public facilities, based on the established LOS, any deficiencies in service conditions (if they exist), and the costs to correct the deficiencies;
- ❖ Estimates of the capital improvement needs to accommodate new growth and development, and their costs, over a five (5) year planning horizon;
- ❖ Preparation of a specific list of capital improvements to be provided by government to accommodate new development over the next five (5) years (Five Year CIP), which shall be updated annually; and
- ❖ A financially feasible program to fund the capital improvements identified in the Five-Year CIP.

**Establish Policies That Only Allow New Development Where There Will Be Adequate Transportation, Potable Water, and Wastewater to Serve the Development.**

The County will maintain its existing policies that adequate potable water and wastewater treatment facility capacity be available to serve new growth prior to development.

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<sup>3</sup> The CIPs are more specific and definite in terms of the capital improvement needs identified, and include a program to fund the capital improvements.

Within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, the County will consider whether it is more appropriate to maintain the existing traffic shed system to determine transportation adequacy or develop an Adequate Public Facilities Program for Transportation facilities. If established, the Adequate Public Facilities Program for Transportation shall require:

- ❖ A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that:
  - ◆ Establishes an LOS to evaluate the conditions of existing infrastructure, identifies deficiencies, and the capital costs to correct deficiencies;
  - ◆ Identifies the capital improvements to provide adequate capacity for new growth and development; and
  - ◆ Is financially feasible so there is funding to provide the needed capital improvements to accommodate new growth and development and to correct deficiencies.
  - ◆ A monitoring program that annually monitors/measures capacity and demand conditions on the transportation system subject to the Transportation Adequate Public Facilities Program; and
  - ◆ An ordinance that evaluates development and ensures development is not approved unless adequate capacity is available to accommodate it.

In addition, within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, the County will consider preparation of an access management plan for the suburban and urban areas of the County that results in a more efficient road system. The access management plan will include, but is not limited to: physically limiting points of access to arterial roads signal spacing requirements, driveway design requirements, shared driveway access, use of acceleration and deceleration lanes, and enhanced connectivity requirements.



## ***Paying For Growth***

### **Establish a Multi-Dimensional Strategy by which the Transportation Facilities and Park Facilities needed to Accommodate New Growth and Development are Funded.**

Within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, the County will develop a strategy to adequately fund the needed capital improvements for Transportation facilities and Park facilities. The strategy will consider and, if appropriate, use several funding sources. It will be designed to be flexible so it can change as conditions change. A strong emphasis should be placed on the concept of having new development "pay its own way." Development of this funding strategy is important if the County's CIPs are to be financially feasible.

Priority for funding for Transportation facilities should focus on four funding sources:

- ❖ State funds;
- ❖ Privilege taxes (adequate facilities taxes); <sup>4</sup>
- ❖ Impact fees;<sup>5</sup> and
- ❖ Property taxes.<sup>6</sup>

Priority for funding for Park facilities should focus on four funding sources:

- ❖ Privilege taxes;
- ❖ Impact fees;
- ❖ Property taxes; and
- ❖ Grants.

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<sup>4</sup> Williamson County is authorized to impose a Privilege Tax (or adequate facilities tax) on new development to offset the cost of growth on the County's infrastructure (Private Acts of 1987, Chapter 118). The maximum Privilege Tax authorized is \$1.00 per square foot on new residential development and \$2.00 per square foot on new non-residential development. Today the privilege tax assessed to offset the cost of growth on the County's infrastructure is \$1.00 per square foot on new residential development and \$0.34 per square foot on new commercial development. The privilege tax is assessed in the unincorporated County and in all six (6) municipalities. Today, Privilege Tax revenues are being used for schools, roads, parks, and fire protection services, even though the majority of revenues (approximately 70%) go to schools (20% is being used for roads). It should also be noted that Williamson County is also authorized to impose an Adequate School Facilities Tax on new residential and nonresidential development, up to \$1.00 per square foot. (Adequate School Facilities Tax, Private Acts of 1987, Chapter 113).

<sup>5</sup> An impact fee is a land use regulatory tool used by a local government that exacts a fair share fee on new development based on the costs the local government will incur to fund capital infrastructure to accommodate new development. In determining the reasonableness of these one-time fees, the analysis that supports the fee should demonstrate that: 1) new capital facilities are needed as a consequence of new development; 2) the fees exacted are a proportionate share of the government's cost to provide the facilities; and 3) revenues are managed and expended in such a way that new development receives a sufficient benefit.

Williamson County is authorized, through special enabling legislation (Williamson County Construction Impact Fee Act, Private Acts of 1987, Chapter 120), to impose impact fees for roads, schools, parks, waterworks, water distribution systems, sewage, storm water and drainage systems. The legislation requires that the developer can be asked to pay..."an impact fee that does not exceed a pro rata share of the reasonably anticipated cost of the public improvements created by the new land development activity." (Section 5).

<sup>6</sup> The property tax is the ad valorem tax imposed by the County. The property tax is a general revenue source, and funds generated by the property tax may be used by the County for capital road improvements (as well as road maintenance).

# *Open Space Protection*

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## *Open Space Plan*

The protection and preservation of open space within the Rural Area and the suburban and urban areas of the County is an important goal of the Plan. The Plan supports multiple goals in order to achieve this, including maintaining the County's rural character and protecting natural resources and cultural/historical resources. To achieve these goals, the County will undertake the following implementation actions:

**Prepare an Open Space Plan for the County that Coordinates Existing Policies and Programs for Open Space Preservation, and Links Conservation and Open Space Lands.**

Within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, the County will prepare an Open Space Plan. To the maximum extent possible, the Open Space Plan will be coordinated with the cities in the County. The Open Space Plan will integrate the concepts of rural protection, natural resource protection, and recreation for the public. The Open Space Plan will:

- ❖ **Establish criteria for the identification of open space lands in the County.** Place an emphasis on conservation areas (wildlife habitat areas, floodplains, steep slopes, karst areas); trails, parks, and outdoor recreation areas; lands that support the maintenance of rural character in the Rural Area; and the linkage of conservation and open space lands. A ranking system will also be established during the planning process, based on the intrinsic values of the County's citizens in regard to open space, which will be instrumental in guiding future County actions with respect to open space acquisition. The ranking system should also be used to guide the County's regulatory open space standards by directing preservation of the highest ranked lands.
- ❖ Inventory existing open space lands based on the established criteria.
- ❖ Prepare a plan for the integration of open space lands based on the established criteria and priority rankings.
- ❖ Identify public education tools to inform land owners and others of alternative mechanisms to preserve open space.

### Explore the Establishment of Dedicated Funding Sources for Open Spaces.

In addition and in conjunction with preparation of the Open Space Plan, within two (2) years of adoption of the Plan, the County will develop a strategy for the creation of a permanent, dedicated funding source to acquire strategic open space lands, consistent with the Open Space Plan (e.g., through a bond issue, impact fees, sales tax or real estate transfer fee, or other alternative funding mechanisms).

### ***Preservation of Open Space in the Rural Area***

#### Preserve Open Space in the Rural Area Through Zoning and Land Use Controls.

Within 18 months of the adoption of the Plan, the County will amend the Zoning Ordinance to assist in the preservation of open space in the Rural Area by:

- ❖ **Adding a conservation subdivision provision**, which will be either optional or mandatory, based on the option selected for single-family residential development in the Rural Areas.<sup>7</sup> The conservation subdivision is designed to permit single-family residential development that allows variations in lot area and setback standards when a large portion of the development site is set-aside as open space, where natural features are protected and agricultural activities can occur. Generally, a conservation subdivision has three primary characteristics: smaller building lots; more open space; and protection of natural features and agricultural activities. Within this framework, the rules for site development emphasize setting aside and conserving the most sensitive areas of a site, with the development of building lots on the remaining, less sensitive areas. (See Appendix 1 for a more detailed explanation of conservation subdivision.)
- ❖ Including provisions that provide for additional protection of natural resource areas.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion of the conservation subdivision process being proposed, see *Maintaining Rural Character in Rural Preservation Area in Land Use Patterns*.

<sup>8</sup> See the strategies discussed in this chapter's section on *Natural Resource Protection*.

## *Preservation of Open Space in the Urban and Suburban Areas*

### Preserve Open Space in the Municipal Growth Areas.

Implementation of the lower densities recommended by this Plan within the MGAs will be the County's primary strategy to preserve open lands in the municipal growth areas while such lands are under the County's land use control. The County will hold such land, and maintain the recommended low densities, until a city annexes the land and applies its own development and open space standards.

### Preserve Open Space in the Suburban Areas Through Land Use Controls.

- ❖ **Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish mandatory open space set-aside requirements inside the Planned Growth Areas.** Open space will be maintained within the PGAs by amending the Zoning Ordinance within 18 months of adoption of the Plan to establish minimum open space set-aside standards for all development (between 15%-25%). A target open space preservation effort will also be initiated in the PGAs to protect scenic or environmentally sensitive areas, such as hillsides.
- ❖ **Prioritize the types of lands to be set-aside for open space.** New open space set-aside standards will also prioritize the types of lands to be set-aside for open space and include location and design criteria for open space usability, contiguity, and the protection of natural resources. The regulations will also include provisions for ownership and maintenance of open space set-asides to ensure that a specified entity, such as a homeowners association, is responsible for maintenance of common areas and improvements and can be held accountable. A payment-in-lieu system for sites which are small or located in areas where an open space set-aside will have very little benefit will also be considered. In these cases, a developer could provide a payment in-lieu of providing the open space land set-aside.

## *Natural Resource Protection*

A fundamental principle in the Plan's goals for the County's Rural Areas is the continued, vigorous protection of natural resources and open space lands. The County's current approach toward natural resource protection, while progressive for its time and relatively successful in effect, relies on a formulistic method of quantifying the quality and extent of a site's natural resources and using those results

to decrease the maximum density on a site. This approach is too complicated and often not flexible enough to account for varying degrees of resource quality and significance from one site to the next. The implementation strategies will seek to move the County to the next generation of tools for natural resource protection – tools that build on the strengths of the current system, but ones which both landowners and County decision-makers should find much simpler to understand and apply.

The County will take the following actions to implement the natural resource protection goals:

**Conserve and Protect Natural Resources Through Enhanced Zoning and Land Use Controls.**

Within 18 months of adoption of the Plan, the natural resource protection standards will be simplified and strengthened through a framework of updated resource protection standards (applicable countywide), and new open space set-aside standards, and an enhanced conservation subdivision mechanism that will support the natural resource protection standards using the following:

**Deleting the natural resource adjustment formulas.** The “natural resource adjustment” formulas in Section 5210 of the Zoning Ordinance will be deleted and replaced by the conservation subdivision and open space set-aside standards. The natural resource protection standards in Article VII of the Zoning Ordinance will be retained, revised, and supplemented as described in the next suggested implementation strategy. These steps, together, will simplify the County’s current approach to natural resource protection.



- ❖ Adding new or revising existing zoning standards to ensure the maximum protection of natural resources in the County. The natural resource standards and regulations will be updated as follows:
  - ◆ Review stream corridor protection standards. The Williamson County Stormwater Regulations provides for the protection of "Waters of the State" anywhere from 50 to 100 feet from the top of the bank. The range of protection is based on upstream drainage areas. Because the regulations were only enacted in 2005, sufficient time has not yet passed to determine their overall effectiveness. The developmental setback noted above shall be reviewed in conjunction with development of the revised Zoning Ordinance to ensure the setbacks are achieving the most effective water quality results as well as protection of wildlife habitat.
  - ◆ Modify the steep slope protection standards. The steep slope regulations (slopes 15% and greater) will be revised to incorporate best practices in controlling the adverse impacts of hillside development. Most important will be a prohibition of land disturbing activity on 30% or steeper slopes (except for limited runs of roadway or access drives) – a standard approach to hillside protection in many communities throughout the country. Other revisions may include more specific limits on grading, terracing, and benching to encourage more site-sensitive building designs.
  - ◆ Carry forward current floodplain protection standards. The current protection standards for floodplain will be carried forward without change.
  - ◆ Adopt new wetland protection standards. The County will adopt a clear and concise definition of "wetlands" tailored to Williamson County conditions, and adopt minimum protection standards. Protection standards may include adoption of a "no net loss" policy; prohibition of filling, dredging, or clearing of designated wetlands; and minimum buffers and development setbacks.
  - ◆ Adopt new standards to protect significant trees on individual building lots. While the existing woodlands protection standards (Section 7112 of the Zoning Ordinance) achieve significant protection of young and established woodlands at the subdivision design level, once individual lots are sold, standards are not in place to assure the long-term protection of significant trees and stands of trees located on an owner's private property. New regulations will be prepared that address the preservation of significant trees, or significant stands of trees, by – for example – mandating the preservation of all healthy trees that are over a certain size (i.e., over a specified "dbh" or "diameter at breast height," expressed in inches), or through other means (e.g., protection of a certain percentage of existing canopy on a site).

- ◆ Adopt heightened karst protection standards. Section 7116 of the Zoning Ordinance, which provides limited protection for sinkholes, will be revised into a comprehensive set of protection standards for karst terrain and critical karst features.
  - ❖ Accordingly, new regulations will provide minimum 100-foot “no disturbance” buffers around critical karst land forms that may permit infiltration of surface water to underground cavities or channels, including but not limited to caves, sinkholes, significant fissures/cracks, vadose shafts, or other karst anomaly. Land disturbing activities will be strictly controlled within the buffer. On-site septic systems and other means of wastewater disposal will be prohibited within the buffer area.
  - ❖ The County should also consider the use of additional protective measures including, but not limited to: reduced density or intensity of development; reduced impervious surface coverage; use of conservation subdivisions in these areas; and prohibited uses or activities near critical karst features.
- ❖ **Adopting new open space set-aside standards for suburban and urban development inside the PGAs.** As discussed under the strategies for Preservation of Open Space in the Urban and Suburban Areas in Open Space Protection, the County will take steps to adopt and apply mandatory open space set-aside requirements within the PGAs. The open space set-aside standards will support the natural resource protection standards by crediting the preservation of significant natural resources toward the required set-aside amount.
- ❖ **Adopting enhanced conservation subdivision provisions.** The conservation subdivision standards will support countywide goals for natural resource protection. The standards will emphasize the set-aside and permanent conservation of the most highly valued natural resources on a site where building lots will be placed on the remaining less sensitive areas.

#### Conserve and Protect Natural Resources Through Cooperation with Non-Governmental Stakeholders.

Within one (1) year after adoption of the Plan, the County will take the following actions to conserve natural resources through cooperation with private parties, organizations, and other non-governmental stakeholders:

- ❖ The County will contact land trust organizations active in Williamson County and seek to coordinate their programs with the County’s open space and natural resource goals. The County will promote the Plan’s goals and policies to these organizations and explore sharing resources and information so that land trust

activities might target dedications or conservation easements for environmentally sensitive areas. Special emphasis will be placed on coordinating County actions and relationships related to open space preservation with the Tennessee Land Trust. Appendix 4 of this plan contains a summary of successful efforts to preserve open space in Williamson County through private organizations.

#### Develop Other Non-Regulatory Programs for Natural Resource Conservation and Protection.

- ❖ Develop a strategy for the creation of a permanent, dedicated funding source to acquire strategic open space and natural resource lands, consistent with the Plan (see discussion under Open Space Protection).
- ❖ Place more emphasis on environmental education by considering the dedication of more resources to educational programs similar to the County's existing stormwater education program. Ultimately, devoting more resources to education in the short term may help reduce long-term enforcement challenges. Examples of possible education programs that will be considered include:
  - ◆ Open Space Education Programs for Landowners. Education for private landowners regarding the range of land conservation incentives and other programs available to them to encourage open space and natural resource protection (e.g., tax relief programs, easement sale/donation options). One approach may be to develop manuals summarizing different programs that can help landowners understand the rules, benefits, and relief offered to promote open space and natural resource protection goals.
  - ◆ General Environmental Education for Students. Educational programs developed in cooperation with local schools to provide environmental education activities that increase awareness, understanding, appreciation and support for stewardship of natural resources. Such efforts should complement and integrate the County's current Stormwater Education Program.



## ***Historic/Cultural/Archeological Resource Protection***

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The preservation of Williamson County's historic resources is an essential component of the Plan's overall goal of preserving rural character in the Rural Area. Historic and cultural resources in the Rural Area are integral to the integrity of the landscape and to the experience of visitors and residents alike. Within the suburban and urban areas, preservation of existing historic sites and resources is also a high priority in perpetuating and commemorating the unique history of place, but will be recognized on a smaller-scale, site-by-site basis.

To implement these goals, the County will take the following actions:

### **Approach Historic, Cultural and Archeological Resource Protection Comprehensively.**

- ❖ **Adopt a comprehensive, planned approach to historic and cultural resource preservation in the County.** Within five (5) years after adoption of the Plan, the County will prepare a historic preservation plan for the unincorporated parts of the County, with particular focus and emphasis on historic resource conservation in the Rural Area. This Plan will, at a minimum, include:
  - ◆ An inventory of historic, cultural sites, and archeological resources and a methodology for prioritizing the significance of each resource;
  - ◆ An analysis of whether any of the inventoried sites and resources may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or the Tennessee Register of Historic Sites, either as districts or individual landmarks;
  - ◆ An evaluation of what specific regulatory and non-regulatory tools are appropriate to implement the Plan's recommendations and preserve the identified historic/cultural resources. This evaluation should include a recommendation as to whether the County should adopt a comprehensive local Historic Preservation Ordinance and/or specific historic preservation design standards and guidelines;
  - ◆ General recommendations for the format and substantive content of any design standards and guidelines found necessary for the effective protection of significant historic and cultural resources in the County; and Recommendations for the administrative mechanism (i.e., staff, existing boards, creation of a new board) to oversee implementation of the Plan.

**Conserve and Protect Historic, Cultural and Archeological Resources  
Through Enhanced Land Use Controls.**

- ❖ **Revise the current historic site protection standards as necessary.**  
Section 7120 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes protection for a list of 78 different historic sites located in the unincorporated County. The existing protection standards ensure design review of new development proposed adjacent to an existing historic structure or site as well as architectural review of proposed exterior modifications to an existing historic structure. However, the regulations provide few specific building design guidelines or requirements to guide property owners in their development plans. Moreover, nothing in the regulations prevent the demolition of an identified historic structure.

Thus, either to implement the recommendations in a completed historic preservation plan, or as interim protection measures, **the County will amend the historic site protection standards to provide greater certainty** to property owners as to what "appropriate" development is **and to prohibit the demolition** of an identified historic structure without prior County review and approval. In addition, a prohibition of "demolition by neglect" (using the national guidelines as a model) will be added to the regulations.

The integration of freestanding historic lands, sites, structures, and archeological sites will be maintained either by buffering them from new development or by integrating them into new development in ways that respect their historical or archeological integrity.



- ◆ Buffers should be located adjacent to (but not within) historic sites, and should have a minimum width of approximately 75 feet. Buffers should be approximately six (6) feet above grade composed of natural undisturbed vegetation, newly planted vegetation supplemented with an opaque fence or wall, topographic contours, or a combination thereof.
- ◆ Integrating the historic or cultural resource into the development can be an effective alternative to buffering if the resource is given a prominent location in the development, the design of buildings and sites within view of the resource are compatible to its scale and architectural character, and pedestrian access to the resource is maintained.
- ❖ Evaluate the success of the Historic Site TDR Program, and revise as necessary. Section 5270 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes a transfer of development rights program for the specific purpose of creating an economic incentive to preserve identified historic sites. Evaluation of Section 5270 of the Zoning Ordinance will occur in conjunction with consideration of an overall strategy as discussed earlier in this chapter.
- ❖ Adopt view shed protection standards for key historic roads. As described in the strategies for Maintaining Rural Character in the Rural Area in Land Use Patterns, the County will explore the possibility of adopting view shed protection standards along key historic roads to maintain the natural and historical integrity of these roadways.



- ❖ Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures in the Rural Area. The County supports the creation of a variety of opportunities for rural commercial, employment, and institutional activities that preserve rural character and that are compatible with the dominant rural land use pattern in the Rural Area. Appropriate rural business uses to be considered as special exceptions during the zoning code update include bed and breakfast enterprises, country inns, rural retreats, private camps and parks, vineyards, farm markets, wayside stands, and similar types of uses. Where possible, the County will encourage and provide incentives so that such uses locate in existing historic and/or agricultural structures.
- ❖ Adopt conservation subdivision provisions. Adding a conservation subdivision provision, whether optional or mandatory, will further historic, cultural and archeological resource protection goals. The open space element of a conservation subdivision is designed to protect not only open spaces and natural resources but significant historic and cultural resources as well. Accordingly, the rules for site development under conservation subdivision provisions will emphasize setting aside and conserving the most highly significant historic or cultural resources on a site (secondary, however, to the protection of sensitive environmental areas), with the development of building lots on the remaining less sensitive areas.



# APPENDIX 1

## CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION



Conservation subdivisions permit single-family residential development with reductions in lot area and setback standards, in return for the landowner setting aside a large portion of the site in open space. Generally, a conservation subdivision has three primary characteristics: smaller building lots; more open space; and protection of natural features. The rules for site development emphasizes setting aside and conserving the most sensitive areas of a site, with the development of building lots on the remaining less sensitive areas. In most cases, by locating development on smaller lots and maintaining open space, a landowner can achieve similar densities as with a conventional subdivision. The additional open space, the protection of natural features, and a more compact development form benefit both the residents and the greater public. Conservation subdivisions implement Williamson County's land use planning goals by helping residential development in the Rural Area maintain rural character and open space, encourage compact development form, and preserve natural features. The actual process of designing a conservation subdivision typically involves the following four basic steps:

### Step 1: Resource Analysis/Mapping

The applicant identifies significant natural and cultural resources on the site. These are two basic categories of resources: (1) Primary conservation areas and (2) secondary conservation areas. Primary conservation areas include lakes, wetlands, floodplains, sinkholes and sinkhole features, streams, river corridors, lands with steep slopes, wildlife habitat, significant vegetation, historic buildings, and archeological sites. Secondary conservation areas include areas of active agricultural activity, land with scenic vistas, and lands with recreation opportunities. The applicant also produces mapping showing resources and open space on neighboring parcels.

### Step 2: Site Visit

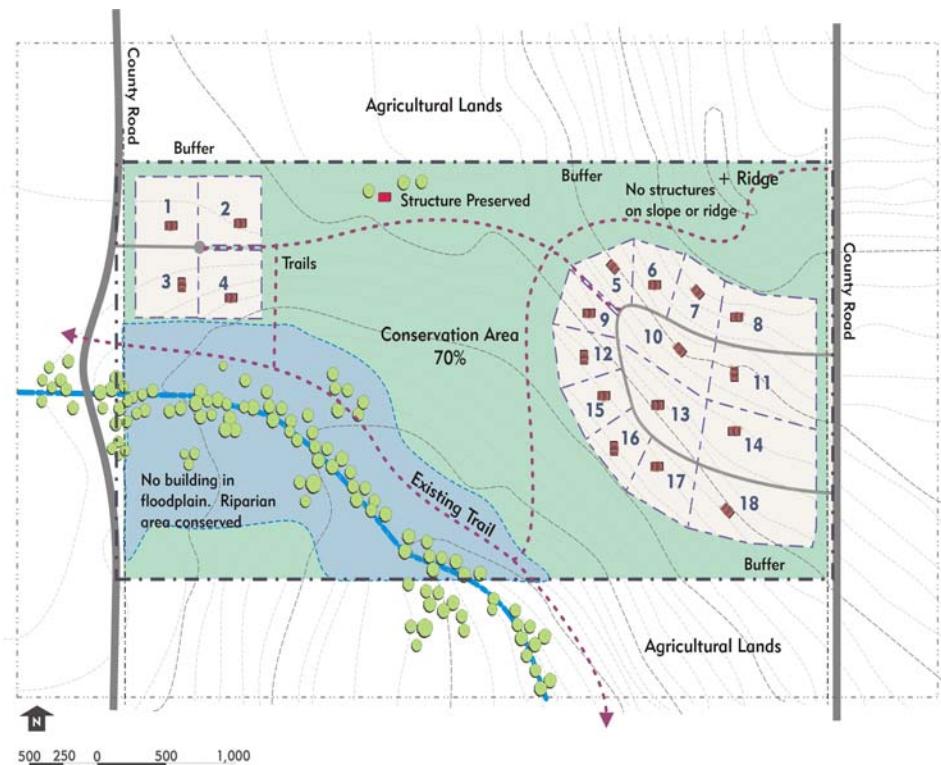
County staff and the applicant visit the development site to see first hand where resources exist and to understand the lay of the land and what areas might be suitable for development sites. The relationship to surrounding parcels is also examined.

### Step 3: Delineation of Conservation and Development Areas

The applicant produces a map that depicts primary and secondary conservation areas and open space as well as areas suitable for development (the development delineation area or the yield plan).

### Step 4: Submission of Conservation Design Plan

The applicant submits a conservation subdivision plat showing primary and secondary conservation areas and open space on the site, along with the development pods where the single family cluster lots would be located. Areas suitable for development are specifically delineated as well as other areas that will be disturbed for accessory structures and uses, septic fields, roads, trails, and utilities. Where applicable, lot lines would be shown on the conservation subdivision plat. The full development density permitted by the zoning district for the entire site would be allowed within the development delineation area.



A conservation subdivision plan with 18 building lots and 70% of the parcel conserved as open space. Natural and cultural features on the site (stream corridor, ridgeline, and original farmhouse) are undisturbed.

## APPENDIX 2

### PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS



The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) concept is an approach to preserving and protecting agricultural lands, environmentally-sensitive areas, and other open spaces through the purchase of a portion of the property rights associated with the land. Typically, the ownership of land includes the possession of a bundle of property rights associated with the land, including: possession, use, modification, development, lease, or sale of the land (or a portion thereof). The ability to extract resources, such as minerals, is an example of one of the rights included within the bundle. A landowner may separate the right to extract minerals, and transfer that ability to another party. After transferring these rights, the landowner is prohibited from exercising them during the term of the agreement. The PDR system operates in exactly the same way, except that the right to develop the land is the right that is transferred by the owner to another party. As is the case in the mineral rights example, following a PDR transaction, the landowner still retains fee simple ownership of the land, and possesses the remaining rights associated with the land (including occupation, use, and sale), but within a PDR system, the ability to develop the land is extinguished for the duration of the term (which is often in perpetuity).

In most cases, the community or other agency seeking to purchase the development rights acquires a legal easement from the landowner that is often referred to as a conservation easement, or an obstacle to future development that is placed on the deed and referred to as a restrictive covenant or deed restriction. These easements or restrictions can work to limit all, some, or a portion of the allowable development based upon the objectives of the purchaser. For example, a conservation easement might be designed to allow a farmer to continue farming, and even construct and sell an additional dwelling provided such activity does not impede the ability to successfully farm the land.

#### *How the system works:*

After obtaining enabling legislation, a local government typically appoints a board or other body to manage the system. The primary functions of the board include reviewing applications from those seeking to sell property rights, obtaining appraisals, prioritizing lands for acquisition, negotiating agreements for selected lands, and

ensuring enforcement of the easement terms. Appraisals are used to determine the value of the development rights being purchased. The value of development rights represents the difference between the land's value with and without the easement. For example, a 100 acre farm may be worth \$10,000 per acre if sold for a residential subdivision, but only \$3,000 per acre with the restrictive easement. This means that the development rights cost \$7,000 per acre, or \$700,000 for the entire farm. Actual purchases by the community or agency should take place under the guidelines of an established plan, and often work best when crafted to create large uninterrupted areas of agriculture or open space instead of smaller sites in a scattered arrangement.

### ***Benefits:***

The key benefit to the PDR system is that it is voluntary, and as such, no one is coerced into giving up development rights. From the perspective of a local government, a PDR system is a very cost-effective way to control the future of the land since it does not require expenditures for fee simple interest or maintenance costs. In addition, the system is flexible and allows the local government to control types of subsequent development, and how or when development can occur (if at all). It is also a technique that allows a landowner to obtain equity value from the land while keeping it in its productive or natural state. The PDR system also helps ensure continued agricultural use by lowering the taxable value of the land.

### ***Disadvantages:***

One major disadvantage of the program is that local governments must typically provide the money for purchases "up front", which can be a strain on budgetary resources. Often, such programs must be established in an area before explosive development potential drives up land values; thus timing is a key issue. Additionally, the program is almost always funded by some form of tax (property taxes, excise taxes, sales taxes, etc.) which can be unpopular with constituents. Since the program is voluntary, a local government has little means of controlling which lands are brought into the system. Since the PDR system relies on easements or other controls, it has little control over the landowner's ultimate disposition of the land. Finally, while the PDR system does avoid many of the long term maintenance costs associated with fee simple acquisition, the local jurisdiction must still assure enforcement of the easement's terms, and unenforced easement rights may be forfeited through neglect.

# APPENDIX 3

## CAPACITY, POPULATION AND DEMAND ANALYSIS



In order to effectively plan for the future growth and development of the unincorporated County, it is important to understand how much growth is likely to occur in the future and to evaluate whether this projected growth can be reasonably accommodated. The amount of anticipated future growth can be considered the "demand", while the ability of the land area to accommodate the projected growth can be considered the "capacity". A comparison of these sets of analysis (demand vs. capacity) provides a basis from which land use policies may be developed and evaluated.

Accordingly, one of the early stages in the Plan Update process involved the development of technical reports in which capacity, population and demand were analyzed for the unincorporated County. The following is a summary of those reports (copies of the complete reports are available through the County Planning Department).

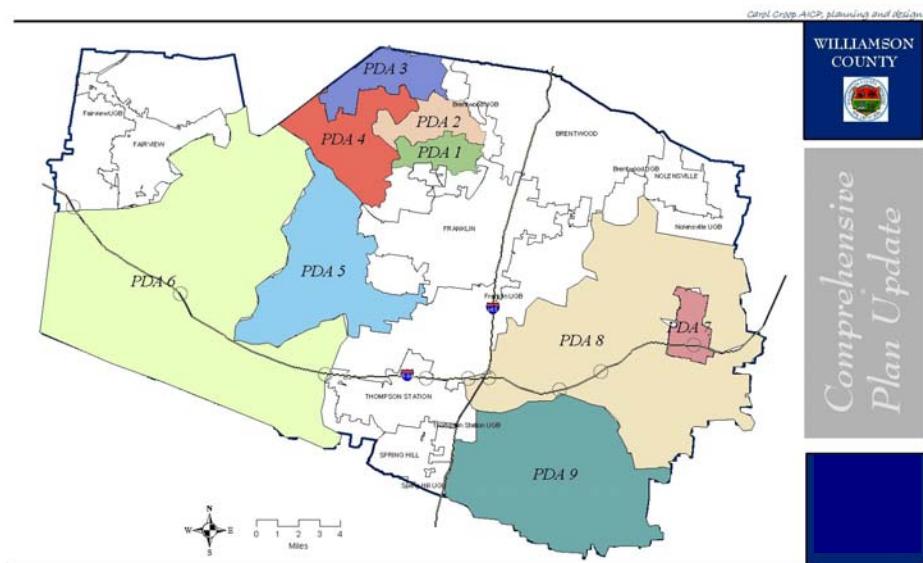
### *CAPACITY*

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The purpose of a Capacity Analysis is to examine how much future growth can be accommodated within a given area. This analysis is based on the amount of land that is potentially available for development, the density of development allowed under current zoning regulations, and natural constraints to development such as topography, floodplain and other features.

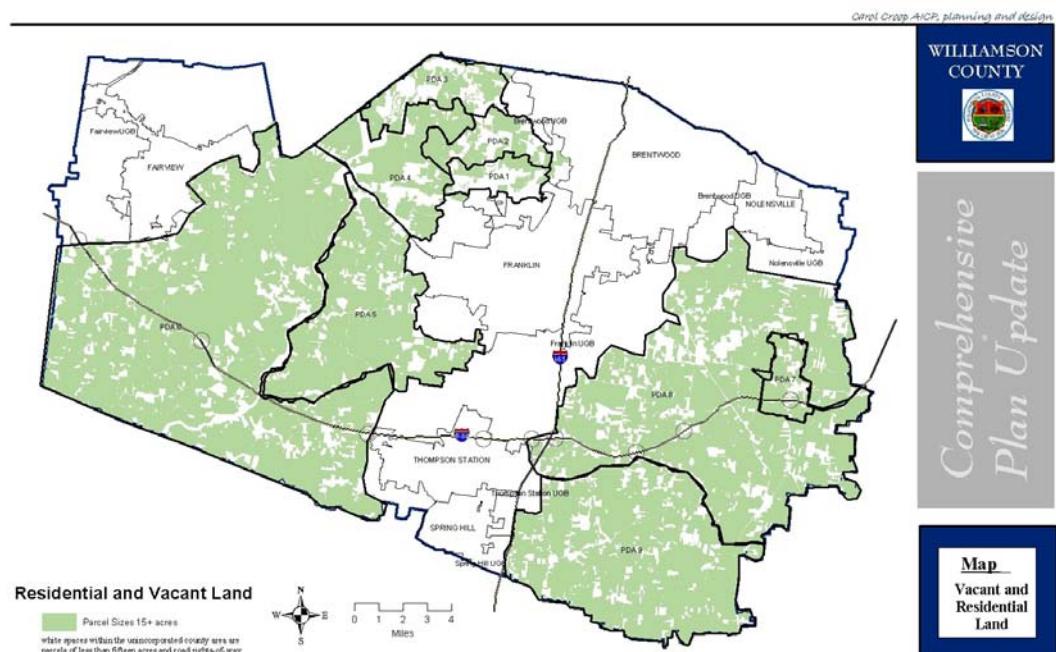
To estimate the development capacity of unincorporated Williamson County, the following steps were taken. First, the unincorporated County was broken down into nine (9) Potential Development Areas (PDAs) for evaluation purposes (See Map 1).

Map 1: Designated PDAs



An inventory of the nine PDAs was then conducted to identify underutilized land that could potentially be developed with residential or non-residential uses. This includes vacant land, land in agricultural uses, and residential uses on large acreage parcels that could accommodate increased densities (See Map 2). Moreover, it excludes areas of existing residential and non-residential development.

Map 2 : PDA by Vacant and Residential Land Over 15 acres



This gross acreage of "available" land was then adjusted to account for natural and man-made constraints to development that will limit its maximum yield. Because of the severe limitations to development they present, areas in floodplains or within drainageways were considered 100% constrained. The most steeply sloping land (over 25% slope) was considered 50% constrained, while land with slopes of 15-25% was considered 20% constrained. (See Map 3 and Table 1)

The current zoning designations were then applied to the net acreage (available land adjusted to account for development constraints) to establish a maximum development density for each PDA. This density, which is expressed as units per acre for residential development, establishes a basis for determining the capacity for development in the County.

Map 3 : PDA Area with Natural Constraints

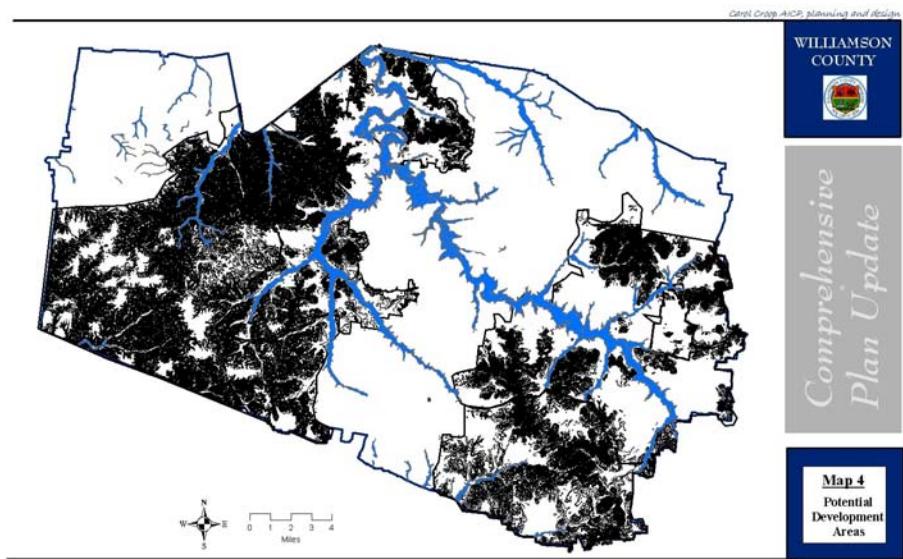


Table 1: Gross To Net Area

PDA Number	Total Gross Acres in PDAs	100% Constrained Area (Acres)	50% Constrained Area (Acres)	20% Constrained Area (Acres)	Unconstrained Area (Acres)	Net Area (Acres)
1	1,582	174	334	161	913	1,112
2	3,111	408	653	622	1427	1,879
3	3,379	797	169	473	1940	2,119
4	7,277	663	2183	1455	2976	4,358
5	17,294	3,440	3026	2975	7853	9,961
6	59,784	762	29,892	17935	11,195	29,728
7	2,472	41	0	111	2320	2,342
8	41,864	6794	6280	4186	24,604	28,581
9	26,523	517	6100	3607	16,299	20,070
Totals (Acres)	163,286	13,596	48,638	31,527	69,526	100,150
Sq Miles	255	21	76	49	109	156
Notes for Table 1: The Net Area is equal to the sum of the Unconstrained Area, fifty percent of the 50% Constrained Area and twenty percent of the 20% Constrained Area.						

Once the densities were applied to the net acreage of land available for development in each PDA, the capacity of development in terms of the number of additional dwelling units that can be accommodated was determined for each PDA and for the County as a whole. Table 2 shows the estimated capacity based on these assumptions. Table 3 shows the dwelling units per PDA.

*Table 2: Capacity Analysis Summary*

PDA Number	SE Zone Acreage	E Zone Acreage	R Zone Acreage	S Zone Acreage	IC Zone Acreage	Total Acreage by Zone
1	1,112					1,112
2	1,879					1,879
3	2,119					2,119
4	872	3,486				4,358
5	5,142	2,248	2,571			9,961
6	1,928	15,426	12,374			29,728
7	1,032		257		1,053	2,342
8	19,303	1,565	6,428	1,286		28,582
9	7,070		12,999			20,069
Total	40,457	22,725	34,629	1,286	1,053	100,150
DU by district	.8 per acre	1 per 5 acres	1 per 5 acres	3 per acre	.8 per acre	
Total DU	50,571	4,545	6,926	3,858	1,316	67,216

*Table 3: Dwelling Unit Capacity Per PDA*

PDA Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dwelling Capacity	1,390	2,346	2,649	1,787	7,392	7,970	1,341	26,157	11,438

## ***POPULATION PROJECTIONS***

In April of 2001, Williamson County and its six (6) municipalities approved population projections in accordance with Tennessee's Public Chapter 1101 and in conjunction with the creation of the Urban Growth Boundaries. Additionally, Woods and Poole released their revised projections for the entirety of Williamson County in early 2005. These two individual sets of numbers, combined with the decennial censuses from 1970 through 2000 were utilized in order to derive both a High End population projection for the entirety of Williamson County and a Low End population projection for the unincorporated County to 2030, the established horizon year for this

Plan. These numbers were used in order to establish a baseline to project dwelling and non-residential demand.

### ***Low End Population Projections***

The Low End projection, completed only for the unincorporated County, was derived using the trend line developed from the population from the decennial censuses for the years 1970 through 2000. This provides a "straight line" trend for anticipated growth for the unincorporated County. This trend is based on the historical County growth rate average of about 1.35 % (1970-2000) annually.

*Table 4: Low End Population Projections*

	*1970	*1980	*1990	*2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Unincorporated Williamson County	19,197	30,335	39,442	45,816	51,490	55,939	60,387	64,834	69,238	73,731

\* Decennial Census Population

### ***High End Population Projections***

The High End population projections for the entirety of Williamson County were derived from the Woods and Poole 2005 Data Pamphlet. These numbers were slightly higher than those published in 2004. The Woods and Poole numbers included the official population for the years 1970 through 2000 from the decennial censuses.

Utilizing the Woods and Poole and the published Public Chapter 1101 numbers, the population for the entirety of the Williamson County was projected forward to 2030. This includes the six (6) municipalities. Several assumptions were made with regards to the population projections as it was noted some projections did not follow past trends, particularly within the unincorporated County, the Town of Nolensville and Thompson's Station.

*Table 5: High End Population Projections*

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Williamson County (Entire County)	*34,423	*58,108	*81,021	*126,638	**152,710	**179,360	**206,880	**234,730	**263,120	**292,530
Brentwood	4,099	10,701	16,392	23,445	28,984	# 37,600	42,098	# 45,300	51,314	57,452
Fairview	1,630	3,648	4,210	5,800	6,795	# 7,448	8,044	# 8,961	10,580	12,164
Franklin	9,497	13,424	20,098	41,842	53,152	(1) 62,500	72,484	# 78,000	87,969	98,204
Nolensville	X	X	X	3,099	4,569	# 6,546	8,159	# 9,993	11,736	13,451
Spring Hill	X	X	176	5,353	7,273	# 8,583	10,509	# 12,000	13,986	15,952
Thompson's Station	X	X	703	1,283	1,540	# 1,717	1,889	# 2,123	2,915	3,643
Unincorporated Williamson County	19,197	30,335	39,442	45,816	50,398	54,966	63,698	78,353	84,621	91,665

\* Decennial Census Population

\*\*Woods and Poole 2055 Data Information

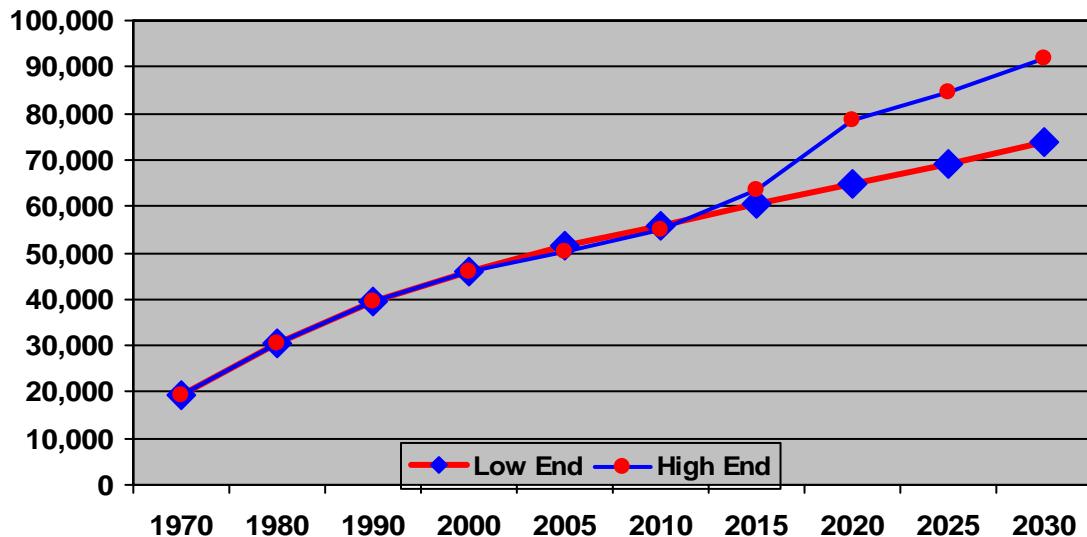
# Public Chapter 1101

(1) Revised by the City of Franklin

The Chart on the following page illustrates the differences between the Low End and High End scenarios.

Chart 1: Unincorporated Williamson County Historic and Forecasted Population Growth

## Unincorporated Williamson County Historic and Forecasted Population Growth 1970-2030



These projections can be used to derive the anticipated demand for dwelling units and the anticipated demand for non-residential square footage needed per dwelling unit for the unincorporated County.

## DEMAND ANALYSIS

### **Residential Demand Analysis**

This analysis was used to determine the number of new single-family dwelling units that are likely to develop in the unincorporated County by the year 2030. The demand for housing units within the unincorporated County was derived by using both the Low and High End population projections. The projected number of persons per household (2.63) is taken from the Woods and Poole 2005 Data Information.

The following formula was used to derive both the Low and High End single-family housing demands

- ❖ Number of Dwelling Units =  $(2030 \text{ population} - 2005 \text{ population}) / 2.63$  persons per household
- ❖ Low End—  $(73,731 - 51,490) / 2.63 = 8,457$  Dwelling Units
- ❖ High End—  $(91,665 - 50,398) / 2.63 = 15,691$  Dwelling Units

Based on these projections, the range of new single-family Dwelling Units that can be expected in the unincorporated County is between 8,457 and 15,691 units.

To calculate the amount of land needed to accommodate these dwelling units, projected building lots are broken down into platted and non-platted lots. For the purpose of this update, the average platted lot size was established at 1.64 acres (Average derived lot size for platted subdivisions from 2000-2004) and the average lot size of non-platted or exempt lots was established at 5.00 acres. The end result was expressed in both acres and square miles of land needed. Sixty-two (62%) percent or 1,270 units were on platted lots and thirty-eight (38%) percent or 779 units were on non-platted or exempt lots. The following formulas were used to calculate the end results.

### Platted Lots

Dwelling Units X % of Platted Lots = Dwelling Units estimated to build upon Platted Lots

Dwelling Units on Platted Lots X 1.64 ac. For platted lot = Acreage needed for Dwelling Units

Acreage needed for Dwelling Units / 640 acres in a square mile = Square miles of Land Needed

### Non-Platted Lots

Dwelling Units X % of Non-Platted Lots = Dwelling Units estimated to build upon Non-Platted Lots

Dwelling Units on Non-Platted Lots X 5.00 ac. For Non-platted lot = Acreage needed for Dwelling Units

Acreage needed for Dwelling Units / 640 acres in a square mile = Square miles of Land Needed

For platted lots, the Low End Projection for land consumption was **8,494.21 acres or 13.27 square miles.**

For platted lots, the High End Projection for land consumption was **15,954 acres or 24.93 square miles.**

- ❖ Based on these projections, the land consumption for platted lots expected in the unincorporated County is between **8,494.21 acres**

and 15,954 acres OR between 13.27 square miles and 24.93 square miles.

For non-platted lots, the Low End Projection for land consumption was 16,070 acres or 25.11 square miles.

For non-platted lots, the High End Projection for land consumption was 29,815 acres or 45.59 square miles.

- ❖ Based on these projections, the land consumption for non-platted lots expected in the unincorporated County is between 16,070 acres and 29,815 acres OR between 25.11 square miles or 45.59 square miles.

*Table 6: High and Low End Land Consumption of Platted Lots vs. Non-Platted Lots in Acres and Square Miles*

	Platted Lots	Non-Platted Lots
Low End Land Consumption in Acres	8,494.21 acres	16,070 acres
Low End Land Consumption in Square Miles	13.27 square miles	25.11 square miles
High End Land Consumption in Acres	15,954 acres	29,815 acres
High End Land Consumption in Square Miles	24.93 square miles	45.59 square miles

## ***Non-Residential Demand Analysis***

In deriving the demand for non-residential land, the number of building permits issued, the number of platted lots, and the number of non-platted lots from the years 2000 to 2004 were tallied and used in the formulas presented in this analysis.

- ❖ There were 107,925 square feet of non-residential building permits issued. This excludes churches and schools and the Williamson County Agricultural Expo Center that were built during these years.
- ❖ There were 2,049 residential building permits issued, and of those, 62% or 1,270 units were on platted lots and 38% or 779 units were on non-platted or exempt lots.
- ❖ This analysis assumes a 0.1 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for non-residential uses.

The projected Non-Residential demand was calculated using the following formulas:

- ❖ Total Building Permits for Non-Residential square footage / Number of building permits issued = the square footage needed per Dwelling Unit.
- ❖ Dwelling Units X sq. footage needed per D.U. = Total Square footage required
- ❖ Total square footage required / 0.1 FAR = Total square footage of land required to meet FAR requirement
- ❖ Total square footage of land required to meet FAR requirement / 43,560 sq. feet/acre = Total Acres Required
- ❖ Total Acres Required / 640 ac. = Square Miles Required

### ***Projected Non-Residential Square Footage Related to Population Growth***

The Low End land area needed for non-residential uses was **103 Acres or 0.16 square miles**.

The High End land area needed for non-residential uses was **191 Acres or .30 square miles**.

- ❖ Based on these projections, the land consumption for non-residential uses expected in the unincorporated County is between **103 Acres and 191 Acres OR between 0.16 square miles or .30 square miles**.

### ***Population and Residential and Non-Residential Demand Summary***

Based on these projections, it is anticipated that the population of the unincorporated County would increase by 27,925 to 45,849 people by 2030. This population would require between 8,457 and 15,691 new housing units and would consume between 8,494 and 29,815 acres of land depending on the type of lot utilized (platted vs. non-platted). This population will also require between 103 and 191 acres of land for new non-residential uses.

## ***COMPARING CAPACITY AND DEMAND***

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The analysis presented in this appendix indicates that the capacity of the unincorporated County to accommodate additional development far exceeds the projected demand, despite a projected continuation of rapid growth. This finding is summarized in Table 7 below. Table 8 summarizes the projected demand between the platted and non-platted lots.

*Table 7: Summary of Demand vs. Capacity*

	Dwelling Units	Approximate Acres
Demand	8,467 to 15,691	24,500 to 46,000
Capacity	67,216	100,000

*Table 8: Summary of Dwelling Demand vs. Dwelling Capacity on Platted and Non-Platted Lots*

	Platted	Non-Platted
Demand	5,000 to 10,000	3,000 to 6,000
Capacity	56,000 Units	11,000 units

## APPENDIX 4:

### PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION: THE LAND TRUST FOR TENNESSEE

*What is a Land Trust?*

*How does the Land Trust for Tennessee protect land?*

*What is a conservation easement?*

*How does the Land Trust for Tennessee enforce its conservation easements?*

*What are the benefits of giving a conservation easement?*

*Are there other tax benefits of giving a conservation easement?*

*What steps do I take to write a conservation easement?*

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# Private Land Conservation: The Land Trust for Tennessee

The Land Trust for Tennessee\* 209 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, suite 530\* Nashville, TN 37203\* 615-244-5263\* [www.landtrusttn.org](http://www.landtrusttn.org)

## What is a Land Trust?

A land trust is a nonprofit organization that, as all or part of its mission, actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, or by its stewardship of such land or easements.

## How does the Land Trust for Tennessee protect land?

The Land Trust protects Tennessee's natural and historic landscapes and sites primarily through voluntary donations of conservation easements that preserve scenic and important land resources.

## What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a voluntary contract between a landowner and a land trust, government agency, or another qualified organization in which the owner places permanent restrictions on the future uses of some or all of his property to protect scenic, wildlife, or agricultural resources.

Conservation easements are specifically tailored to meet the conservation and financial/tax planning needs of each landowner. The easement is donated by the owner to the land trust, which then has the authority and obligation to enforce the terms of the easement "in perpetuity." The landowner still owns the property and can use it, sell it, or leave it to heirs, but the restrictions of the easement stay with the land forever.

## How does the Land Trust for Tennessee enforce its conservation easements?

The Land Trust monitors each conservation property at least annually to ensure that the terms of the conservation easement are being met. If a violation of an easement is discovered, it is the Land Trust's legal and moral obligation to ensure that the violation is rectified. The Land Trust operates in accordance with the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices.

## What are the benefits of giving a conservation easement?

A gift of a conservation easement benefits a landowner by permanently protecting the important conservation qualities of the property without the landowner having to give up ownership, and frequently by creating immediate tax advantages. An easement may reduce federal income and capital gains taxes, local property taxes, and/or estate taxes.

## Are there other tax benefits of giving a conservation easement?

Although, depending on the situation, there may be significant income tax benefits, savings on inheritance taxes are for some the important savings a family will reap after giving a conservation easement. A conservation easement can be the most effective way for parents to pass down property to their children.

## What steps do I take to write a conservation easement?

First, contact the Land Trust for Tennessee. Explore with them the conservation values you want to protect on the land, what you want to accomplish, and what development rights you may want to retain. Remember that you should consult with your own attorney or financial advisor regarding such a substantial decision and any tax benefits that may apply to your individual situation.

