

# **CITY OF GRAHAM**

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN 2000-2020**

# CITY OF GRAHAM

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 2000-2020

#### **Steering Committee**

Dexter Barbee, Sr.    Chairman

Zach Ambrose

Jack Bailey

James Brannon

Dave Dillard

Angela Hall

Roger Jefferson

Rae Keane

Brenda Lloyd

Larry Mize

Jerry Trollinger

Mike White

Prepared by:

Russell Smith, NC Department of Commerce,

Division of Community Assistance, Winston-Salem Regional Office

Paul Kron, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

Jason Sullivan, City of Graham Planning Department

# **GRAHAM GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN 2000-2020 Graham, North Carolina**

The Graham Growth Management Plan has been developed with the cooperation of the citizens of Graham and the surrounding area, the City Council, the City Planning Board, the City staff, and the Graham Growth Management Plan Steering Committee. This plan shall serve as a guide for Graham in making development decisions. The plan recommends that the City Council, Planning Board, City staff, and developers utilize this document to provide for the orderly growth of the City. The plan can be modified by the City Council after formal adoption and it is recommended to do so as conditions within the planning jurisdiction evolve.

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**Adopted the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2000  
by the Graham City Council.**

**GRAHAM GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW**

Graham, North Carolina is a community of over 11,000, which has seen continual growth over the last half century. As a result of this growth the qualities that make Graham special in the eyes of its citizens are slowly eroding. The last fifty years has seen countryside turn into conventional subdivisions and the once thriving downtown has been stripped of its commercial components, leaving governmental and office uses. Much of the commercial development has relocated to strip malls within the City or has even left town for Burlington, Graham's larger neighbor to the west.

Even with these changes the City still finds itself with continuing development, revitalization efforts occurring in the downtown, and the City in overall good financial shape. However, the elected officials and community want more. The growth that is occurring does not meet the demands of the community and many feel that the City is without a plan to guide growth into the next millennium.

In response to these and other factors, the City of Graham's City Council approved funding for the development of a growth management plan.

### **1.1 PURPOSE**

This document is a twenty-year growth management plan for the City of Graham. The plan addresses various elements of growth ranging from community appearance to economic development. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Build community consensus on future development patterns.
- Create a Growth Management Plan to guide future development decisions.
- Develop goals and policies for individual planning districts.

### **1.2 GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Steering Committee that developed the plan was an offshoot of the Graham Economic Development Committee (GEDC) that was organized in the summer of 1998. After several GEDC meetings it became apparent to the GEDC that they needed an updated plan for the City before any other work could be done. The GEDC henceforth created the Graham Growth Management Steering Committee to work with City staff and others on developing a new Growth Management Plan for Graham.

The steering committee was comprised of twelve citizens, business leaders, real estate professionals, and environmental specialists. The steering committee was the voice of the citizens of Graham and they helped guide the planners from the NC Division of Community Assistance and Piedmont Triad Council of Governments to create a plan that would best serve the City of Graham. In addition, Town Meetings allowed the community to provide input into the plan throughout the planning process.



### 1.3 MISSION STATEMENT

**“To enhance our quality of life and make Graham an even better place to live and work by managing growth, encouraging development in the most appropriate places, and improving places already developed.”**

### 1.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

From the beginning public participation in the planning process was of crucial importance. The City and Steering Committee felt that without enough community input this plan would be like many before it and just collect dust on a shelf.

The Steering Committee that helped guide the development of the plan was the first step in making sure that the public had input in the plan. The twelve members of the Steering Committee met monthly for over a year. During these meetings they discussed the existing conditions within Graham, determined key issues facing the City, and analyzed population, economic, and social data. The final plan resulting from these meetings represents the views of the people of the community and not those of a planner who was brought in to make a “plan.”

About halfway through the planning process the Steering Committee decided to hold a “Town Meeting” to see if they were on track with the community’s ideas and concerns. The “Town Meeting” was held on September 30, 1999 to allow the citizens of Graham a chance to see what the Steering Committee had created and more importantly, to encourage other citizens input into the planning process. Over 60 citizens attended the two-hour “Town Meeting” held at the Graham Middle School. The results of the Town Meeting reinforced and honed the issues, ideas, and concerns already expressed by the Steering Committee through its months of work. In a couple of instances the Town Meeting highlighted additional issues that were not discussed by the Steering Committee.

In January 2000, the Steering Committee divided up into four groups of three to develop individual planning district plans (that can be found in Section 5 of the plan). These groups called on the additional help of two to five citizens from each planning district to aid in the planning effort.

Following completion of the plan and prior to adoption, the Steering Committee held a public forum to discuss the plan with City Council members, Planning Board members, and citizens. This public forum took place in the beginning of March 2000. The goal of the meeting was to allow the public to provide final input into the plan before it went before the Planning Board and City Council for adoption. In addition, copies of the completed plan were made available at the Graham Public Library and City Hall for all those who could not attend the meeting.

## 1.5 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The scope of the plan encompasses the City of Graham's Planning Jurisdiction and future growth areas, which include the land found within the City limits, extra-territorial jurisdiction and other surrounding property.

## 1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The plan is organized into eight sections; Introduction and Overview, Issues and Vision Statement, Background Information, Comparison of Development Patterns, Strategic Issues, Goals to Guide us into the Future, Planning District Guidelines, and Implementation and Review. All of these sections build on one another to incorporate the two main components of the plan: facts and values.

Facts are the reality of what has occurred and what is occurring in Graham. For example, facts include information on population, economy, water service, transportation, zoning and a multitude of other information. All these facts provided the Steering Committee with a firm foundation of where Graham has come from and where it is headed. Most of the facts can be found in Section III, Background Information, of the plan.

The values of the community are not as concrete as facts. Values include how people feel about certain places, what is important to them, and what needs to change. Values are subjective and each person brings forward different values to the planning process. The plan incorporates the values that have gained a consensus within the community. Such as, maintaining Graham's small town character, improving the downtown, and improving the community's appearance.

The first four sections of the plan are primarily concerned with establishing the facts and values. Section five takes the facts and values and blends them together into a realistic plan that represents the community's wants and desires.

## 1.7 HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The plan is designed as a growth management guide for the community. Elected officials, appointed board members, City staff, developers, and citizens should view the plan as a tool that can be used for making development decisions. The plan has three major components that will guide growth. The components are Strategic Issues, General Goals and Planning District Plans. These components work together to evaluate proposed developments and also provide developers with information on what the City wants, in terms of growth. The components should be viewed as a funnel that gets more specific as you move from Strategic Issues to the individual Planning District Plans.

The Strategic Issues that were identified refers to items that are better addressed at the citywide level. These issues are not specific to an individual planning district, but impact the entire City. The following three areas were identified in this section and are as follows: Land Use and Management Systems, Downtown, and Transportation. The goals

and recommendations that are listed in this section, in conjunction with the General Goals and Planning District Plans, have the potential to have a positive impact on the appearance of the City.

The General Goals that were developed include goals for the Environment, Urban Services, and Land Uses. The goals set a general context for how development should impact the environment, how services should be delivered and what types of development patterns should occur. The goals should be used as a first cut in evaluating a development proposal.

The Planning District Plans offer specific information on development within each planning district. Graham is divided into four planning districts and each one includes a map showing where specific types of development should occur, pictures of the different kinds of developments appearances, and a general description of each development type. After a development proposal has been evaluated with the General Goals of the plan, the next step is to review the Planning District Plan. When evaluating the proposal it is important to check the location, type of development and appearance against the Planning District Plan.

## **2. ISSUES AND VISION STATEMENT**

### **2.1 KEY ISSUES**

Growth has been identified as a key issue facing the City of Graham. During meetings with the Steering Committee as well as at the “Town Meeting” most people agreed that growth is an important issue. In particular four questions concerning growth have been raised.

- What kind of Growth does Graham want?
- How much Growth does Graham want?
- Where should Growth be located?
- What should the Growth look like?

The answers to these questions vary depending upon which part of the City you are dealing with. One answer is clear though: the people of Graham know growth is coming and they want growth. However, they also want more input into what the growth looks like and where it is located.

The appearance of development is the second key issue facing the City. In addition to improving the quality of new growth Graham receives, the residents of Graham would also like to improve the existing appearance of the community. Most of the residents believe that Graham has an excellent foundation in place with the downtown and the existing residential neighborhoods. However, they believe that these areas can be improved to make the community more aesthetically pleasing.

### **2.2 EXISTING and EMERGING CONDITIONS**

First, the City of Graham continues to receive a constant flow of growth in the form of new cul-de-sac subdivisions and strip malls. These development patterns are slowly eroding away Graham’s small town atmosphere that the current citizens enjoy. In addition most of the new development is occurring south and east of the historic core of the City.

Secondly, the growth that Graham is receiving is turning Graham into a bedroom community. The development of new subdivisions has resulted in more people calling Graham home, while working in another city. More people are commuting further away to both the Greensboro/High Point/Winston-Salem area and the Triangle region, while enjoying the lower cost of living found in Graham. Graham residents enjoy a lower cost of living because land is less expensive, taxes are lower than in the larger metropolitan areas to the east and west, and public services are cheaper.

Incremental rezoning has resulted in the development of strips of commercial uses along major arterials in Graham. The rezoning of parcels of land one at a time has proliferated the strip development in Graham. Besides being unattractive in many cases, strip developments also reduce walkability, increase traffic congestion due to numerous curb

cuts, and offer no interconnectivity between different uses. This development pattern is evident along South Main Street and has begun to occur on NC 54. Additional pressure will be placed on NC 54 with the widening of the highway to five lanes, which is scheduled to begin within the year.

Finally, due to the Interstate, Graham has seen a rise in the amount of highway-oriented business. Graham's interchanges are developing with the Interstate traveler in mind and not the community. The Interstate is a major asset for the community, but it should be used for the community's benefit and not just the people who drive through the City. Future development along the Interstate should focus on the creation of upscale retail areas and office parks for employment opportunities.

### 2.3 VISION STATEMENT

In the year 2020, the City of Graham will continue to enjoy the small town atmosphere that makes it so appealing to its residents. The downtown will have seen a renaissance and will once again become the center for community activities. Capitalizing on its strategic location, Graham will have attracted many new businesses that enjoy easy access to both the Triad and Triangle regions.

The City's commitment to quality growth, evidenced by the growth management plan created at the turn of the millennium, has assisted in the development of a livable community. Graham has many neighborhoods that are linked to other parts of the City by roads as well as bike trails and sidewalks. The sprawling development patterns of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been incorporated into a more compact development pattern. The compact development patterns incorporate many of the features found in the historic part of Graham including, narrower streets, sidewalks, corner stores, and smaller lots. These things aid in restoring Graham's small town atmosphere. Residents of Graham enjoy greater access to public open space, a less cluttered and more attractive landscape, less dependence on the automobile, and a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Graham also has continued to provide quality services to its residents by planning for the future expansion of water systems, sewer systems, parks and roads. Since these services have been planned they are delivered at a reasonable cost. Developers have also been able to plan and provide better quality development since the Growth Management Plan highlights the location of new development, type of development that is desired, as well as suggestions on the appearance of new development.

### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 HISTORY**

The beginnings of Graham date back to the mid 1800's. On April 19, 1849 the residents of Orange County, one of the largest counties in North Carolina at that time, voted by a narrow margin to divide Orange County into two counties because of its size, and the difficulty of serving all its residents from the county seat. The western part of the county became Alamance County, so named for the Battle of Alamance, which preceded the Revolutionary War on a site within the county.

The most desirable location nearest the geographical center of the new county was chosen as the site for the courthouse and thus, the county seat. This new town was named Graham in honor of the Whig Governor of North Carolina at that time, William A. Graham. The town became the first town to be incorporated in Alamance County, in January, 1851. Silas M. Lane, a surveyor, laid out the town of Graham. The original size was a square containing 75 acres bounded on the north by what became Market Street and on the south by what became McAden Street. The courthouse occupied a 297-foot square and blocks were set at 420 feet square. The original brick and stucco courthouse was completed that same year, 1851, but was replaced by the current structure in 1923.

The first commercial building, W.J. Nicks Grocery and Feed Store, a three-story brick structure, was built in 1850 at the southeast corner of the square. On the northwest corner of the square were the town's water supply, a wooden pump and water trough. This area became the trading center and the court square resembled the commons of a New England Village.

In 1856 plans were announced that the North Carolina Railroad running from Goldsboro to Charlotte would pass within one block of the courthouse. With this announcement came images of a peaceful square becoming filled with smoke, dirt, and grime from the massive steam engines and noise from the engines scaring all the horses and other animals on the square. Graham's residents decided to pass an ordinance forbidding the construction of a railroad within 1 mile of the courthouse. With this ordinance Graham's chance of becoming a large metropolis was lost. The railroad company located its maintenance and repair shops approximately three miles west of Graham and this area became known as Company Shops. This grew into what is now the City of Burlington, the largest city in the county.

At the time of the Civil War, Graham was an educational, legal, and business center. In 1885 an early tobacco factory was built, but by 1890 textiles had replaced tobacco as the major industry. By the turn of the century, Graham had become a "quiet and attractive residential village" and within the next several years, Graham had a water works and electric plant. In 1911, the Piedmont Railway and Electric Company began a streetcar service between Burlington, Haw River, and Graham, ending its line on North Main Street in front of the courthouse. The town scales were located on the north side of the

courthouse and were replaced in 1914 by a monument honoring the Soldiers of the Confederacy.

Graham has experienced substantial growth after World War II. From 1950 to 1987 Graham’s population doubled in size to over 10,000 people with the most growth occurring between 1950 and 1960. In 1961 Graham was no longer referred to as the Town of Graham, but instead, as the City of Graham. Today just under 12,000 residents call Graham home and life in Graham has been described as “quiet and comfortable.” (Comprehensive Land Use Plan 1989.)

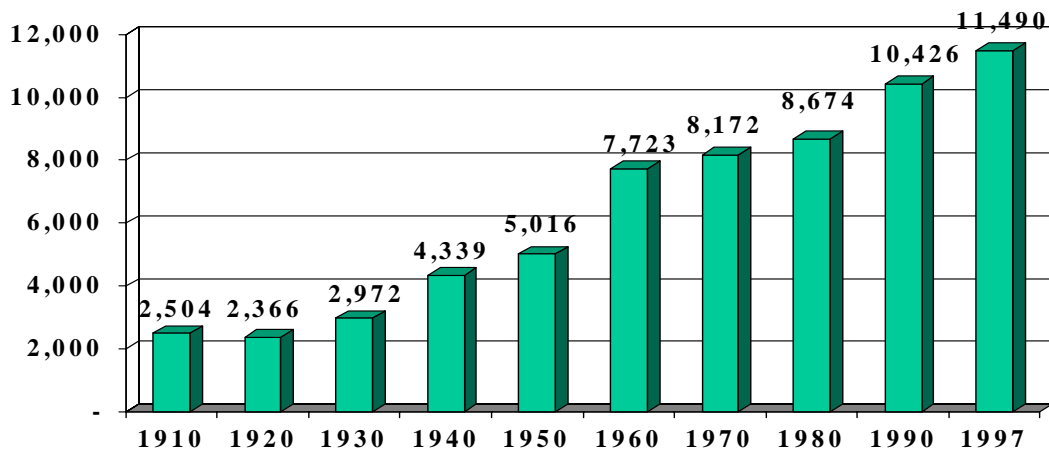
### 3.2 POPULATION, HOUSING, and ECONOMY

A detailed analysis of Graham’s population, housing, and economy was performed for the creation of the Growth Management Plan. The entire analysis, *City of Graham – Community Profile 1999*, can be found in the Graham Planning Department. The following statistical tables were taken from that document.

#### 3.2.1 Population

Over the past fifty years Graham has experienced a continual rise in population. This has allowed the community to react to changes better than other communities that have been flooded with growth. Graham has seen a continual increase in population due to its location, designation as county seat, and small town charm.

### A HISTORICAL LOOK AT GRAHAM’S POPULATION 1910-1997



Source: US Census Bureau and the NC Office of State Planning, 1997 estimates released in 1998.

It is difficult to project the population of any municipality due to the unpredictability of potential annexations. However, over the past decade Graham's proportion of Alamance County's population has stayed relatively stable, averaging about 9.61% of the county's total population. Assuming that Graham's population growth continues at a proportional pace with the overall County population, it is estimated that the City's population will be about 14,126 in the year 2020. This estimate is the result of looking at historical growth patterns. If a large industrial or residential project gains approval over the next twenty years the population of Graham could easily be much larger.

## **POPULATION PROJECTIONS GRAHAM & ALAMANCE COUNTY**

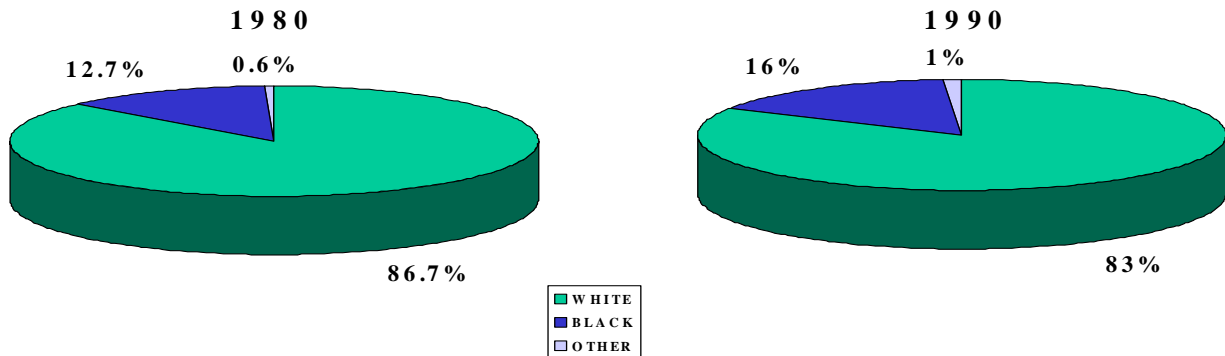
	<u><b>Graham</b></u>	<u><b>Alamance County</b></u>
1940	4,339	57,427
1950	5,016	71,220
1960	7,723	85,674
1970	8,172	96,362
1980	8,674	99,319
1990	10,368	108,213
1997	11,490	119,820
2000	<i>11,967</i>	124,525
2005	<i>12,505</i>	130,128
2010	<i>13,050</i>	135,794
2015	<i>13,585</i>	141,361
2020	<i>14,126</i>	146,992

*Source: US Census Bureau, NC Office of State Planning 1998, and City of Graham Planning Dept. 1999*

Graham's population is predominantly white, but it is becoming increasingly diverse. The City's minority population grew from roughly 13% of the total population in 1980 to approximately 17% in 1990. In the 1980's, Graham's population grew by just over 1,600 people. However, whites, which accounted for 83% of the population, accounted for just over 65% of the City's growth.



## CITY OF GRAHAM - RACE



Source: 1980, 1990 Census Population and Housing.

Although current race estimates are not available for cities, data from the NC Office of State Planning indicates that the number of minorities within Alamance County overall has been increasing over the past seven years.

The following chart shows that the age segment that gained the most population between 1980-1990, was the 35-44 year old group. The second highest growth was seen in the 65-74 age group, followed by the 0-4 age group. In fact, persons age 65 and older accounted for 31% of the total growth seen in Graham in the 1980's. Three age groups lost population in the 1980's. The biggest decline was seen in the 10-14 age group followed by those between 15 and 19. The number of persons 55-59 also declined in the 1980's.

### AGE RANGES OF GRAHAM'S POPULATION

Age Range	1980	1990	Change
0 - 4	458	701	243
5 - 9	556	612	56
10 - 14	658	547	(111)
15 - 19	726	624	(102)
20 - 24	726	785	59
25 - 29	691	889	198
30 - 34	652	899	247
35 - 44	958	1511	553
45 - 54	992	1057	65
55 - 59	563	496	(67)
60 - 64	482	543	61
65 - 74	739	1006	267
75 - 84	354	590	236
85+	119	166	47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,674</b>	<b>10,426</b>	<b>1,752</b>

Source: 1980, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF1-A File

### 3.2.2 Housing

In the past twenty years Graham has seen a steady amount of residential growth in the form of new subdivisions. These subdivisions have helped to replenish and add to the housing stock found within the City. These new homes have tended to be relatively affordable and generally located on ¼ acre lots. However, Graham still has a large amount of older homes located within the City.

Graham's housing occupancy rate is higher than both the County and State's figures. In 1990, only 5% of all structures were vacant.

### OCCUPANCY RATES (Households)

	Houses	Occupied	% Occupied	Persons per Household
Graham	4,517	4,290	95%	2.33
Alamance County	45,312	42,652	94.1%	2.47
NC	2,818,193	2,517,026	89.3%	2.54

Source: 1990 Census

The number of households in the City of Graham is growing at a faster rate than the population. While the population growth rate in the 1980's was 10.8%, households grew by 20.8%. The average household size declined from 2.50 to 2.33 between 1980 and 1990.

### HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES & HOUSING VALUES

	% of Owner Occupied Units	Median Value
Graham	60.9%	\$62,100
Alamance County	71.8%	\$65,300
NC	68.0%	\$65,800

Source: 1990 Census

Homeownership rates within the City of Graham are lower than the County and State percentages. However, Graham's median home value is lower than both the County and the State as a whole.

### UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	Single-family	Multi-Family	Mobile Home/Other
Graham	66.4%	24.2%	9.4%
Alamance County	71.8%	14.2%	14.0%
NC	67.6%	16.3%	16.1%

Source: 1990 Census

Graham has a good mix of housing types and prices. The majority of Graham’s housing stock is single-family, with roughly 25% of all housing being multi-family and the remainder of housing being mobile homes or other. By providing a variety of housing options within the City no groups are excluded. In addition, Graham is known for it’s affordable housing that makes it attractive to first time homebuyers.

### 3.2.3 Economy

## INCOME

	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Median Family Income</b>	<b>Per Capita Income</b>
Graham	\$24,509	\$30,516	\$12,163
Alamance County	\$27,130	\$32,810	\$13,290
NC	\$26,647	\$31,548	\$12,885

*Source: 1990 Census*

Household, family and per capita incomes are all lower for Graham in relation to County and State figures. The poverty rate for all people in Graham is just below the State average. Graham's poverty rate for all people is higher than the County's average. Graham’s poverty rates are disproportionately high, especially among the elderly.

## POVERTY

	<b>All Persons</b>	<b>Children (0-17)</b>	<b>Elderly (65+)</b>
Graham	11.8%	15.5%	20.9%
Alamance County	8.9%	11.3%	15.9%
NC	13.0%	16.9%	19.5%

*Source: 1990 Census*

As of 1990, there were 5,569 Graham residents in the labor force. However, commuting data indicates that approximately 5,743 people worked in Graham in 1990. All of those (or 5,743) lived in Alamance County, but only 1,253 lived in Graham. Worker-commuting data for Graham is as follows:

### **WORKFORCE AND COMMUTING STATISTICS FOR GRAHAM, 1990**

Total Graham labor force	5,569
Employed Graham residents	5,228
Graham labor force working in Graham	1,253
% of Graham workers working in Graham	24%
Total employment in Graham (estimate)	5,743
Estimated in-commuting	4,490
Estimated out-commuting	3,975

*Source: 1990 Census*

### WHERE GRAHAM RESIDENTS WORK

	# of workers	% of all workers
Graham	1253	24%
Alamance County	650	12.4
Burlington	2199	42.1%
Mebane	172	3.3%
Elon College	72	1.4%
Gibsonville	-	-
Greensboro-Winston Salem- High Point MSA	447	8.6%
Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill MSA	364	6.9%
Elsewhere	66	1.3%

*Source: 1990 Census*

Over 42% of Graham's workers find employment in Burlington while 24% of workers are employed within Graham. The creation of additional employment opportunities could increase the number of people that live and work in Graham. While no historic data is available, many feel that the number of workers that live in Graham and work in the Triad and Triangle is on the rise.

### WHERE GRAHAM'S WORKERS COME FROM

	# of workers	% of all workers
Graham	1253	21.8%
Elsewhere in Alamance County	4,490	78.2%

*Source: 1990 Census*

### GRAHAM'S PROPORTION OF RETAIL SALES IN ALAMANCE COUNTY

	Alamance County	Graham	% of County
1993	\$1,124,377,168	\$133,096,450	11.8%
1994	\$1,199,190,361	\$145,623,420	12.1%
1995	\$1,303,841,921	\$148,788,805	11.4%
1996	\$1,444,953,012	\$156,641,532	10.8%
1997	\$1,492,400,210	\$169,164,503	11.3%
1998	\$1,535,421,213	\$164,122,569	10.7%

*Source: NC Department of Revenue*

Graham's proportion of retail sales for the County has been slowly declining. For the past five years or so, Graham has controlled a little more than 10% of the retail sales in Alamance County.

### 3.3 DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

#### 3.3.1 Physiology

The City of Graham is located in the center of Alamance County. It is bounded by the City of Burlington on the west and northwest, the Town of Haw River on the northeast, and the Town of Swepsonville on the southeast. Graham has a total land area of 7.25 square miles within the City limits. Graham is the 73<sup>rd</sup> largest municipality in reference to land area within the State of North Carolina.

#### 3.3.2 Hydrology

Graham lies within the Cape Fear River Basin, which is the largest river basin in North Carolina. The basin begins in the north central piedmont region of North Carolina and drains southeast to the coast. The entire basin covers 9,324 square miles of land and contains 6,204 miles of streams, the largest number for any basin in the State.

The City of Graham, located in the north central piedmont region of the State, is bordered by Boyd's Creek on the east. The southern boundary of Graham's planning area is defined by Great Alamance Creek. Finally, the Haw River flows through the eastern part of the City's jurisdiction.

##### *3.3.2.1 Watersheds*

The Water Supply Watershed Protection program enables local governments to collectively plan for the protection of their drinking water. Watersheds do not conform to governmental jurisdictional boundaries; rather they are defined by topography. In some situations the boundaries of a watershed and governmental unit may be mutual. The North Carolina Division of Water Quality emphasizes the need for comprehensive water quality planning in order to protect all water resources within the State.

Graham does not have any Water Supply Watersheds (Class I-V) located within its planning jurisdiction. However, Graham's water supply, the Graham-Mebane Lake is an area regulated by Water Supply Watershed Protection ordinances administered by Alamance County. While Graham does not have a Water Supply Watershed Protection Ordinance, it is important to realize the need for protecting all water resources found within the community because the rivers and streams in Graham flow from and to other communities.

##### *3.3.2.2 Flood Prone Areas*

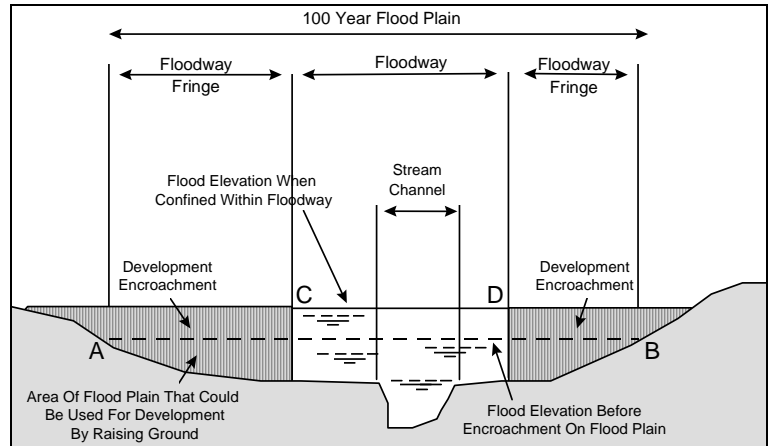
The City participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and enforces a flood prevention ordinance within the City limits and extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The NFIP, last updated in December 1998, is a valuable tool to be used by planners and developers to promote sound development practices within vulnerable areas. The NFIP identifies areas that are subject to 10, 50, 100, and 500-year flood events. A flood event refers to the probability that a flood will occur in any 10, 50, 100, or 500-year period.

Each of these events have a 10, 2, 1, and .02 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded during any year respectively. The likelihood of a 10-year flood event occurring in every year is 10%. The figures do not mean that every 10 years a flood of that magnitude will occur; the actual probability is much higher.

Development encroachment on floodplains reduces the flood-carrying capacity, increases the flood heights and velocities, and increases flood hazards in areas beyond the development itself. One aspect of floodplain management involves balancing the economic gain from floodplain development against the resulting increase in flood hazard.

For purposes of the NFIP, a floodway is used as a tool to assist local communities in this aspect of floodplain management. Under this concept, the area of the 100-year floodplain is divided into a *floodway* and a *floodway fringe*. The floodway is the channel of a stream plus any adjacent floodplain that must be kept free of encroachment so that the 100-year flood can be carried without substantial increase in flood heights. Minimum Federal standards limit such increases to 1

**Figure 1  
Floodway Schematic**



Line AB is the flood elevation before encroachment.  
Line CD is the flood elevation after encroachment.

foot, provided hazardous velocities are not produced. The area between the floodway and the 100-year floodplain boundaries is called the floodway fringe. The floodway fringe encompasses the portion of the floodplain that could be completely obstructed without increasing the water-surface elevation of the 100 year flood more than 1 foot at any point. Typical relationships between the floodway and the floodway fringe and their significance to floodplain development are shown in Figure 1. More attention must be given to the relationship between development activities near or in the floodway/ floodway fringe and land use activities both up and down stream.

### 3.4 EXISTING LAND USE

Graham has a wide variety of land uses found within the planning jurisdiction. Graham has an urban center with a multitude of commercial, governmental, and industrial land uses. In addition, the more rural ETJ has large residential tracts and agricultural uses.

In the summer of 1999, the City of Graham conducted a survey of existing land uses within Graham's Planning Jurisdiction. The results of the Land Use Survey can be found on the following map. The findings of the Land Use Survey show that most of the land

within the City limits of Graham has been developed for urban purposes. The land found within the ETJ is relatively rural and provides the City with areas in which to grow.

### 3.5 HISTORICAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES

#### 3.5.1 National Register of Historic Places

The historic properties located within Graham reflect the character and heritage of the people that have lived in the area. Currently, Graham has two districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP): the Courthouse Square Historic District and the North Main Street Historic District. In addition to these two districts, Graham has four other individual structures that have been identified by the State of North Carolina as being eligible for nomination to the NRHP.

The following is a list of all eligible historic structures within Graham's jurisdiction that are located on the State of North Carolina's study list:

- Sidney Mill and Mill Houses – North Main Street and Providence Road
- J. Clarence Walker House – 808 Sideview Street
- Children's Chapel United Church of Christ – 334 E. Harden Street
- Providence Church and Cemetery – North Main Street

The study list is an inventory of properties that have been deemed potentially eligible for nomination by the State of North Carolina.

The National Historic Preservation Act created the National Register in 1966. The act recognizes and protects properties of historic and cultural significance that warrant consideration in federal undertakings such as highway construction and urban renewal projects. In addition, the act also provides incentives for local and private preservation initiatives.

Listing on the National Register is primarily an honor, that shows a structure or structures have been researched and evaluated according to established procedures and determined to be worthy of preservation for its historical value. Being listed on the National Register does not carry with it any restrictions, unless the owner wishes to apply for federal benefits such as a grant or tax credit. Income-producing historic properties are eligible to receive a 20% state tax credit and a 20% federal investment tax credit for the cost of a certified rehabilitation project. Non-income-producing historic properties are eligible for a 30% state tax credit.

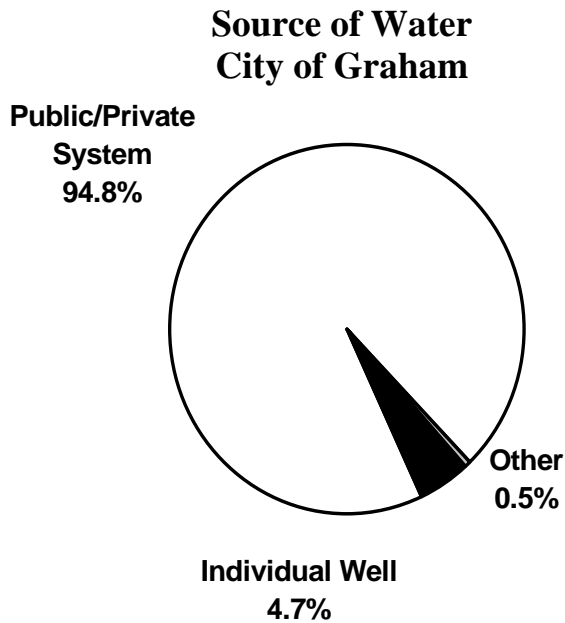
The Courthouse Square Historic District has also been designated a local historic district by the City Council. The Graham Historic District Commission is responsible for administering the Courthouse Square Historic District, which is composed of most of downtown. The Commission is primarily responsible for the review of Certificates of Appropriateness (COA's) for structures and land within the district. The role of the Historic District Commission is to preserve the historic and cultural character of Graham

and to protect the downtown from any inappropriate changes that may destroy the special qualities found within the Courthouse Square Historic District.

### 3.6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES and SERVICES

#### 3.6.1 Water

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, over 4,000 (95%) of Graham's households obtain their water through a public system or private company. 212 households receive their water from an individual drilled well and 23 households utilize an individual dug well.



*Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990*

#### 3.6.1.1 City Water Treatment Facilities and Capabilities

The City of Graham is co-owner of the Graham-Mebane Water Treatment Plant (Graham owns 2/3<sup>rd</sup> and Mebane owns 1/3<sup>rd</sup>.) The plant began operation in 1976 and is located on Graham-Mebane Lake in the Northeastern part of Alamance County. The lake itself is 650 acres, providing 2.3 billion gallons of storage with a yield of 11.5 million gallons per day (mgd). The water treatment plant itself has a capacity of 6 mgd and is currently in the planning stages to enlarge to 12 mgd.

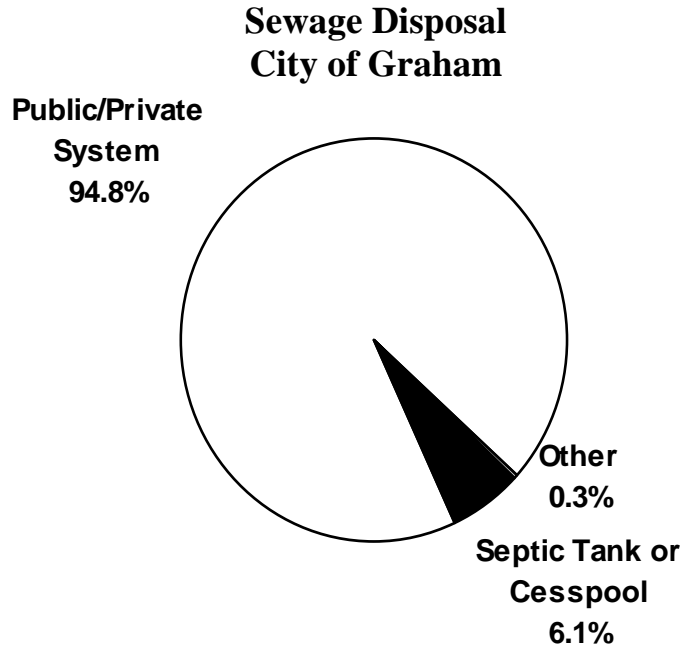
The City operates over 57 miles of water mains. On average the City distributes over 2.5 mgd of water. The City has interconnections to provide emergency water service to the City of Burlington and the Town of Haw River and receive emergency water from the City of Burlington. These interconnections have provided constant water service to the residents of Graham during emergencies, such as a major line break.



With the planned expansion of the Graham-Mebane Water Treatment Plant the City is poised to continue to provide excellent service to both its industrial, commercial, and residential users, as well as accommodate new development.

### 3.6.2 Sewer

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 4,230 households in Graham were on the Public Sewer System. 274 households utilize a septic tank or cesspool for sewage disposal and 13 households use other means.



*Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990*

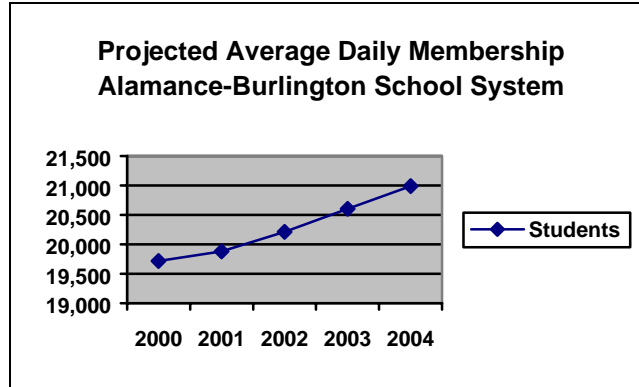
#### 3.6.2.1 City Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Capacity

The City owns and operates the Graham Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) located on Town Branch Creek, which flows into the Haw River. The WWTP discharges into the Haw River. The plant was constructed in 1960 and was upgraded and expanded in 1980. The present permitted capacity of the WWTP is 3.5 mgd. The average wastewater treated in 1999 was 2.0 mgd. An upgrade of the facility has been designed and construction will begin in 2000.

The City maintains over 67 miles of sewer lines throughout the City and surrounding area. Graham also receives sewer service from the City of Burlington, at the South Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City of Burlington has gained final approval for a major outfall line, following the Great Alamance Creek to the South Burlington WWTP, that will open up more developable land in the southern part of Graham's planning jurisdiction.

### 3.6.3 Schools

Graham is part of the Alamance-Burlington School System, which has a current enrollment of 20,058 (the 13<sup>th</sup> largest system in the State). The school system is the result of a 1996 merger between the Burlington City and Alamance County School Systems. The school system has a total of 31 schools throughout the County. The NC Department of Public Instruction projects that by the school year 2003-2004, the Alamance-Burlington School System will have a Projected Final Average Daily Membership of 20,991 (an increase of 6.5%).



Graham has four public schools located within the City Limits; North Graham Elementary, South Graham Elementary, Graham Middle School, and Graham High School. In addition, Graham is also home to the Alamance Christian School, a private school. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, Graham had over 2,000 school age children enrolled in school, with approximately 6.7% of those students attending private school. The percentage of students attending private school for the entire County is 6%, while the total State has 5.1% of all students attending private school.

Graham’s public schools have started to become overcrowded, as seen by the proliferation of mobile classrooms found on school property. The following chart highlights the enrollment and capacity of the public schools found within Graham. The Campus Capacity category includes mobile classroom units.

#### GRAHAM’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAPACITY

School	Enrollment	Building Capacity	Campus Capacity
<b>North Graham Elementary</b>	341	367	N/A
<b>South Graham Elementary</b>	606	521	625
<b>Graham Middle School</b>	705	550	628
<b>Graham High School</b>	748	854	N/A

Source: Alamance-Burlington School System, 1999.

A new elementary school and middle school are currently under construction. These new schools are scheduled to open in the 2000-2001 school year. The school system hopes that these two new facilities will reduce the strain on the schools within Graham.

Graham is also home to the Alamance Community College (ACC), which “was founded in 1958 to serve the occupational needs of the areas residents”. The college is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and offers over 90 certificate, diploma, and degree programs. ACC has an annual credit enrollment of approximately 5,000 students and a non-credit enrollment of over 12,300 per year.

The Alamance Community College is a valuable resource to the community and offers the opportunity for local residents to improve their education and also provides local employers with qualified workers. ACC has the potential to lure additional industries to the area.

#### 3.6.4 Transportation

The Burlington-Graham Urban Area Transportation Plan 1999-2025 should be consulted for further information on particular transportation planning efforts.

##### 3.6.4.1 Highway

The City of Graham maintains 48 miles of roads according to the 1999 Powell Bill. Interstate 40 & 85 run east/west through the City, which provides convenient access to the Triad and Triangle. In addition, NC State Highway 87 and 54 both run through the City. Graham is fortunate to have an excellent road system in place that provides access to the surrounding metropolitan areas.

The interstate and some of the major roads within the City are becoming increasingly congested. The following roads all have an average daily traffic count of more than 10,000 cars:

Interstate 40/85 & South Main Street – 84,600  
Interstate 40/85 & NC 54 – 79,000  
Interstate 40/85 & Jimmie Kerr Road – 73,900  
South Main Street & Rogers Road – 18,000  
South Main Street & Ivey Road – 20,000  
South Main Street & Hanford Road – 27,100  
South Main Street & Gilbreath Street – 19,700  
South Main Street & McAden Street – 17,500  
NC 54 & Ivey Road – 12,200  
NC 54 & Cooper Road – 11,600  
NC 54 & Cherry Lane – 11,300  
NC 54 & Woody Drive – 14,600  
North Main Street & Harden Street – 10,600  
North Main Street & Providence Road – 10,500  
North Main Street & Maple Street – 10,200

E. Harden Street & E. Elm Street – 11,900  
E. Harden Street & Oakgrove Drive – 10,200  
E. Harden Street & E. Pine Street – 10,400  
E. Harden Street & Riverbend Road – 13,100  
W. Harden Street & W. Pine Street – 13,500  
W. Harden Street & Washington Street – 15,600  
W. Elm Street & Popular Street – 11,500  
Graham-Hopedale Road & W. Hanover Road – 10,700  
E. Pine Street & South Maple Street – 13,900  
Jimmie Kerr Road & Trollingwood Road – 10,100

In response to the increasing congestion felt on many of Graham's thoroughfares new facilities and road widenings are planned. According to the *2000-2006 Transportation Improvement Plan* (North Carolina Department of Transportation) the following transportation projects have been programmed to begin by 2006:

- NC 54 – SR 2106 (Whittemore Loop) to NC 119. Widen to a five-lane curb and gutter facility.
- Graham Hopedale Road – SR 1716 (Graham-Hopedale Road), Providence Road to US 70 widen roadway to multi-lanes with railroad grade separation.
- Maple Street – Maple Street extension to NC 87 at Moore Street. Construct two-lane facility on new location.
- Trollinger Road – SR 1943 (Trollinger Road) widen roadway to a three-lane curb and gutter facility in vicinity of Graham High School.
- Bridge #106 – Alamance Creek, replace bridge #106.

Additional transportation improvements that have been identified for the City of Graham, but which have not been programmed include:

- Southern Alamance Parkway – A southern bypass that will be built along new and existing roads.
- Jimmie Kerr Road – Widening from two to four lanes from Trollingwood Road to the Alamance Community College.
- Bakatsias Road – Extension of Bakatsias Road from Porter Road to Cherry Lane.
- Thompson Road – Completion of Thompson Road.

3.6.4.2 Air

Graham is fortunate to be located between two international airports and is in close proximity to Burlington Alamance Regional Airport. These factors help make Graham more marketable for business and industry. The table below lists surrounding airports and their characteristics.

**Air Transportation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number Runways</b>	<b>Runway Length (feet)</b>	<b>Type of Ownership</b>	<b>Type of Users</b>
<b>Smith Reynolds</b>	Forsyth	2	6,654	Public	Public
<b>Greensboro PTI</b>	Guilford	2	10,000 6,380	Public	Public
<b>Raleigh Durham International</b>	Wake	3	10,000 7,000 3,550	Public	Public
<b>Burlington Alamance Regional Airport</b>	Alamance	1	5,000	Public	Public

3.6.4.3 Rail and Other

Graham has both passenger and freight service running through the City. Passenger service is available through Amtrak at the new Burlington station. The high-speed rail corridor, from Raleigh to Charlotte within the State and between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta on a larger regional scale, pass through Graham. Due to the presence of the high-speed rail corridor, future road improvements or construction must be in the form of overpasses as opposed to at grade crossings.

3.6.5 Fire Protection

The City of Graham Fire Department serves Graham. The department is a combination unit that is made up of 9 full-time firefighters and 23 local volunteers. The department has a rating of 5 and also operates a Level A HAZMAT Unit. The department is equipped with 3 pumper trucks (the largest pumping 1,250 gallons per minute) and 1 ladder truck. The average response time for the department is 4 minutes.

3.6.6 Electricity/Telephone/Natural Gas

Duke Power provides electricity in the City of Graham. BellSouth provides the City with its telephone service. Piedmont Natural Gas and Public Service Gas companies provide natural gas.

3.6.7 Solid Waste

The City of Graham Sanitation Department collects solid Waste. The City also participates in a recycling program. Waste Management Industries currently has the contract on providing recycling services to all of Graham’s residents.

### 3.7 CURRENT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The City of Graham has two major ordinances that regulate development of land: the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

#### 3.7.1 Zoning

From the attention given the subject by legal writers and in court decisions, it is clear that confusion exists as to the distinction between "planning" and "zoning." In reality, zoning is one of many legal and administrative devices by which plans may be implemented. Most of the confusion has arisen out of the fact that many jurisdictions have adopted zoning ordinances before embarking on full-scale planning.

Zoning is essentially a means of insuring that the land uses of a community are properly situated in relation to one another, providing adequate space for each type of development. It allows the control of development density in each area so that property can be adequately serviced by such governmental facilities as the street, school, fire, police, recreation, and utility systems. This directs new growth into appropriate areas and protects existing property by requiring that development afford adequate light, air and privacy for persons living and working within the community.

Zoning is probably the single most commonly used legal device available for implementing the land-use plan of a community. Zoning may be defined as the division of a county (or other governmental unit) into districts, and the regulation within those districts of:

1. The height and bulk of buildings and other structures;
2. The area of a lot which may be occupied and the size of required open spaces;
3. The density of population;
4. The use of buildings and land for trade, industry, residence or other purposes.

Of major importance for the individual citizen is the part zoning plays in stabilizing and preserving property values. It affects the taxation of property as an element of value to be considered in assessment. Ordinarily, zoning is only indirectly concerned with achieving aesthetic ends, although there has been an increasing tendency to include provisions within zoning ordinances, which are most solidly based on "general welfare" concepts.

Zoning has nothing to do with the materials and manner of construction of a building; these are covered by the building code. Also, the zoning ordinance may not be properly used to set minimum costs of permitted structures, and it commonly does not control their appearance. These matters are ordinarily controlled by private restrictive covenants contained in the deeds to property. There are, however, some examples, particularly in relation to historic buildings and areas, where zoning has been and is being used effectively. There appears to be a trend toward a greater acceptance of aesthetic control as a proper function of the zoning ordinance.

The zoning ordinance does not regulate the design of streets, the installation of utilities, the reservation or dedication of parks, street rights-of-way, and school sites, and related matters. An official map preserving the beds of proposed streets against encroachment can be useful for protecting right of way. The zoning ordinance should, however, be carefully coordinated with these and other control devices. It is becoming more common for the provisions of many of these separate ordinances to be combined into a single comprehensive ordinance, usually called a land development control ordinance.

Graham established zoning in the early 1950's. Over the years, the zoning ordinance has changed to incorporate newer principles of land use regulation such as special use zoning and planned unit developments (PUD's).

If a property is zoned properly for its intended use, then the needed permits can simply be obtained through application and the payment of any required fees. If a rezoning is required, the approval of the City Council must be obtained. This process can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the magnitude, complexity and any controversy generated by the proposal.

The City of Graham is divided into the following zoning districts:

- R-18 Single-family Residential
- R-15 Single-family Residential
- R-12 Single-family Residential
- R-9 Single-family Residential
- R-7 Single-family Residential
- R-MF Residential Multi-Family
- R-G Residential General
- B-1 Central Business
- B-2 General Business
- B-3 Neighborhood Business
- I-1 Light Industrial
- I-2 Heavy Industrial

Most of the historic part of the City is zoned R-7, while the surrounding rural landscape of the ETJ is R-18. The major arterials into and out of the City are slowly being rezoned to General Business, B-2. It is important to note that a request to change the zoning ordinance, whether by application for a general district or a special district, is a request to change the basic plan for the area where the property is located. For example, if someone applies to change the zoning from residential to commercial to allow a used car lot, regardless of the special conditions on the site, the basic issue is still whether a business should be located on that property and does it meet the general purposes of the ordinance. Such decisions or changes to the plan may not individually have a large impact, but taken collectively may indicate the need to revise or modify the plan to meet continuing demands for growth and development.

The City of Graham has recently revised the Zoning Ordinance and placed it within a larger Development Ordinance that includes the City's Subdivision Regulations. The

revised ordinance raises the standards for development within Graham in an effort to improve the City. Some of the new changes include a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay, which provides developer's more flexibility in return for a higher quality development. A new landscaping ordinance has been adopted to improve the appearance of new and expanding businesses and help buffer existing structures. Finally, the new Zoning Ordinance has an updated table of permitted uses.

### 3.7.2 Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations are locally adopted laws governing the process of converting raw land into building sites. They normally accomplish this through plat (map) approval procedures, under which a developer is not permitted to make improvements or to divide and sell his land until the governing body or planning board has approved a plat of the proposed design of his subdivision. The approval or disapproval of the local government is based upon compliance or noncompliance of the proposal with development standards set forth in the subdivision regulations. In the event that the developer attempts to record an unapproved plat with the local registry of deeds or to sell lots by reference to such a plat, he may be subject to various civil and criminal penalties.

Subdivision regulations may serve a wide range of purposes. To the health officer, for example, they are a means of insuring that a new residential development has a safe water supply and sewage disposal system and that they are properly drained. To the tax official they are a step toward securing adequate records of land titles. To the school or parks official they are a way to preserve or secure the school sites and recreation areas needed to serve the people coming into the neighborhood. To the lot purchaser they are an assurance that he will receive a buildable, properly oriented, well-drained lot, provided with adequate facilities to meet his day-to-day needs, in a subdivision whose value will hold up over the years.

Subdivision regulations enable the City to coordinate the otherwise unrelated plans of a great many individual developers, and in the process to assure that provision is made for such major elements of the land development plan as rights-of-way for major thoroughfares, parks, school sites, major water lines and sewer outfalls, and so forth. They also enable the City to control the internal design of each new subdivision so that its pattern of streets, lots and other facilities will be safe, pleasant, and economical to maintain.

From the standpoint of the local governing board, subdivision regulations may be thought of as having two major objectives. First, these officials are interested in the design aspects of new subdivisions, as are the other officials mentioned. But secondly, they are also interested in allocating the costs of certain improvements most equitably between the residents of the immediate area and the taxpayers of the City as a whole. When subdivision regulations require a developer to dedicate land to the public or to install utilities or to build streets, they represent a judgment that the particular improvements involved are (1) necessary in a contemporary environment and (2) predominantly of special benefit to the people who will buy lots from him (presumably at a price sufficient to cover the cost of these improvements) rather than of general benefit to the taxpayers of



the City as a whole.

Graham has recently amended its subdivision regulations. The new subdivision regulations, which are incorporated into a larger Development Ordinance, provide for the buffering of perennial streams, the installation of sidewalks within new subdivisions and allows City Staff to approve minor subdivisions. These changes reflect the desires of the community to encourage quality development within Graham's jurisdiction.

### 3.7.3 Downtown Improvements

The City has taken a proactive approach to revitalization efforts within the downtown. The first step in the revitalization effort was the Graham Downtown Visions Project. This project created a vision of the downtown through computer imaging. Citizens and property owners created computer generated images of what specific streets, buildings, and vacant lots could look like in the future.

A major outcome of the project was the emphasis that was placed on improving both the public and private spaces within the downtown. Graham has already started to reinvest in the downtown by purchasing over \$30,000 in new street furniture that has been placed throughout the downtown. The City has recently replaced overgrown trees in the downtown and rehabilitated the brick planters where the trees were located. Possible future plans include the construction of a downtown park, placement of utility wires underground, and brick crosswalks.

The private property owners have also begun to reinvest in the downtown. Several under utilized buildings within the downtown are currently being remodeled and revitalized. The southeast corner of Court Square has been recently purchased and is undergoing a major rehabilitation effort. The plans for that corner include saving the 1851 Nick's General Store, and opening up office space in previously vacant buildings.

The Graham Downtown Visions Project provides developers and the City with a guide on how the downtown should be revitalized. The citizens of Graham want to save the historic character of the downtown and also make the downtown a focal point for the entire community.

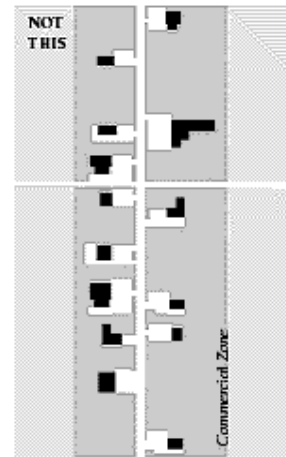
## 4. COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The Graham Growth Management Plan provides a new vision for the development of the City and surrounding area. The vision includes several new types of development patterns. This section provides a general explanation of the differences between the current approach and the desired development type.

### 4.1 STRIP DEVELOPMENT vs. COMMERCIAL CENTERS

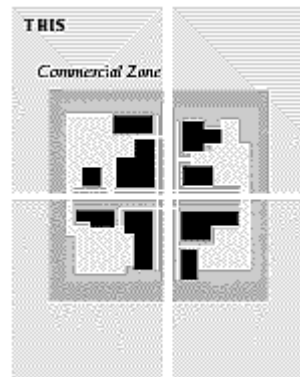
*Strip Development:* Currently most of Graham's commercial development has occurred in linear strips along major thoroughfares. The characteristics of strip development include:

- Automobile oriented
- Large parking lots
- Large front yard setbacks
- Single use (i.e. only commercial)
- Numerous curb cuts
- No interconnectivity between uses
- Poor design characteristics



*Commercial Center:* The Commercial Center is based on applying the attributes of a traditional downtown to a new site that is smaller in scale. The characteristics of a Commercial Center include:

- Pedestrian and automobile friendly
- Few curb cuts or limited access
- Buildings built to a pedestrian scale
- Building closer to the road
- Interconnectivity between uses and shared parking
- Mixed use (i.e. commercial, office, multi-family residential)
- High quality design characteristics



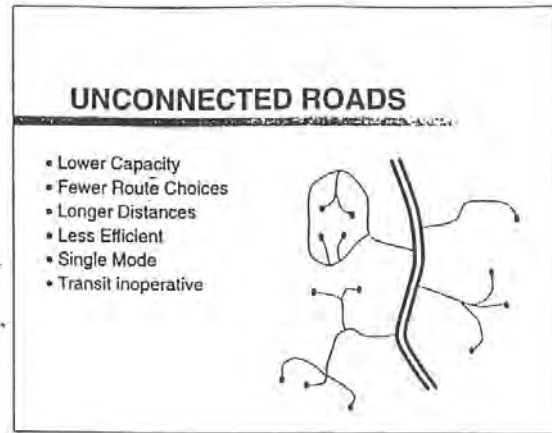
*Illustrations: Access Management: A Guide for Roadway Corridors, Humstone & Campoli*

The Graham Growth Management Plan incorporates the principles of Commercial Centers as a viable alternative to the current Strip Development. Time after time the Steering Committee and the public displayed their dislike for strip development.

## 4.2 UNCONNECTED ROADS vs. ROAD NETWORK

*Unconnected Roads:* The current proliferation of cul-de-sac subdivisions has resulted in a transportation network that limits the number of ways through town. In addition to the residential subdivision, commercial development has also been guilty of providing no connectivity between uses. The characteristics of Unconnected Roads include:

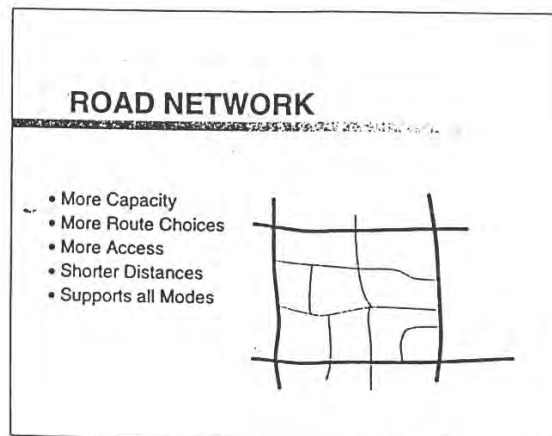
- Lower capacity
- Fewer route choices
- Longer driving distances
- Less efficient
- Single mode of transportation



*Source: Mocksville Policy Guide*

*Road Network:* A transportation system based on a Road Network will help aid in the traffic congestion found on some of Graham's major thoroughfares. Increasing the number of choices will help to disperse traffic throughout the City. The utilization of a Road Network will result in:

- More capacity
- More route choices
- More access
- Shorter distances
- Supports all modes of transportation

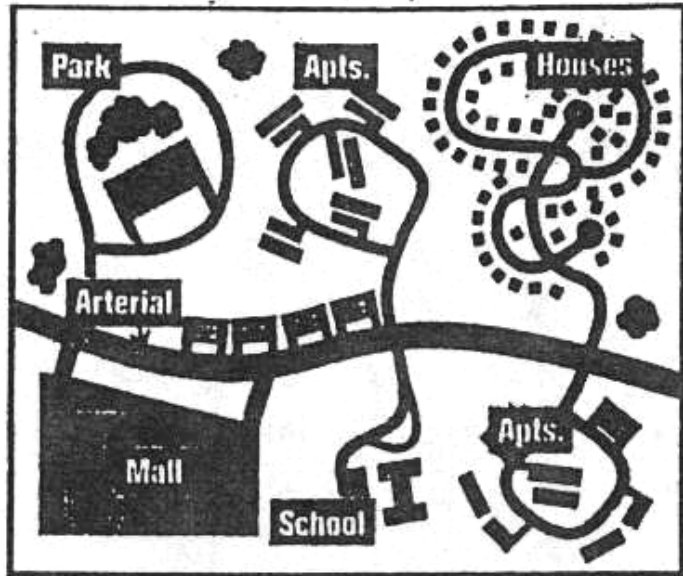


*Source: Mocksville Policy Guide*

The Graham Growth Management Plan supports the use of Road Networks within new residential and commercial areas to provide Graham with more transportation options throughout the City. The Road Network can be incorporated into new subdivisions, new commercial centers, and even office parks.

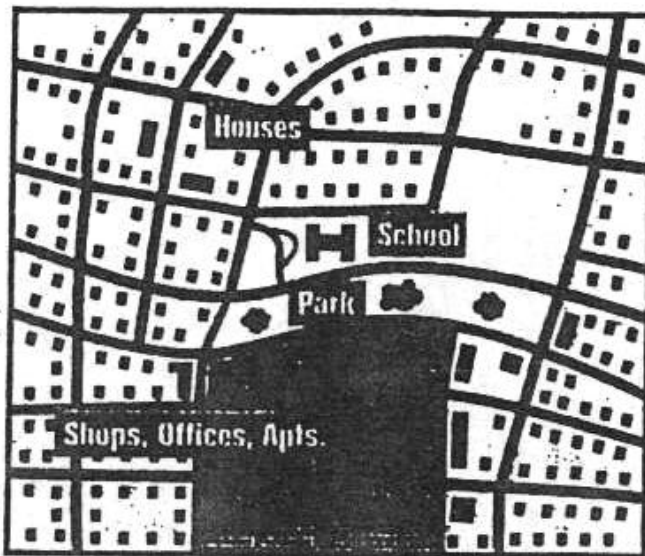
### 4.3 SEPARATION OF USES vs. MIXED USE

*Separation of Uses:* The standard zoning ordinance has created a situation in which all uses must be segregated from one another. This has resulted in the destruction of lively neighborhoods that included a neighborhood store as well as the removal of residences from the Central Business District in many communities. While some uses need to be separated from one another, many others would work well together if designed properly. For example, the construction of five, three story multi-family apartment buildings in the middle of a single-family residential district would not work. However, a multi-family townhouse development that is designed to compliment the surrounding neighborhood, could fit in. The Separation of Uses has resulted in the creation of “pods” of development. The diagram highlights the current problem with separation of uses, all traffic must get out onto the main road to go anywhere.



Source: Mocksville Policy Guide

*Mixed Use:* The concept of Mixed Use goes back to the time before zoning when many uses were found in a neighborhood. The historic part of Graham has many examples of commercial, multi-family, and single-family uses working together within the same



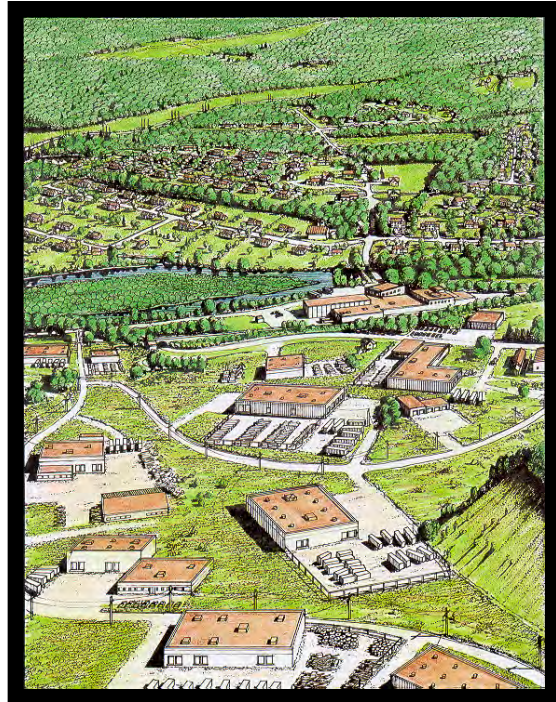
development. By encouraging a mix of uses you can decrease traffic, allow people opportunities to walk to work or the store, and promote commercial development that has a residential market built into the development. The Central Business District is an excellent example of mixed-use development that intertwines offices, retail establishments, and residences to serve multiple needs.

Source: Mocksville Policy Guide

#### 4.4 CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT vs. OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT

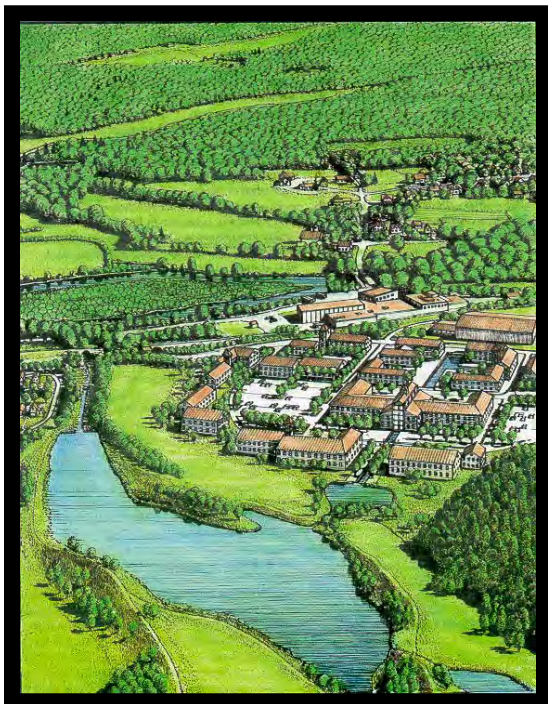
*Conventional Development:* Conventional Development maximizes the number of lots or retail space that can be created out of any piece of land. This method of development pays little attention to environmental factors, neighborhood design, or open space. The goal of the development is to place as many houses or businesses on the site as allowed under the current zoning ordinance. As a result land that should be preserved due to environmental conditions or topography gets turned into a backyard or graded for parking.

In addition, this type of development places a greater burden upon the City because it does not provide any recreational space for the residents and results in an overcrowding at parks and other recreational facilities. The conventional business development is often aesthetically unpleasing, results in increased runoff to other properties, and increases traffic.



*Illustration from Rural By Design, Randall Arendt*

*Open Space Development:* An Open Space Development looks to provide a designated area as open space within the development. This land is permanently protected from development and can be used by the neighborhood as a recreation amenity. The developer that chooses to develop in this manner can still build the same number of units, but on smaller lots and with less infrastructure to construct as a result of clustering the development. By encouraging Open Space Development the City can increase the recreational opportunities for its residents, decrease the amount of infrastructure that needs to be maintained, and increase the attractiveness of the overall community.



*Illustrations from Rural By Design, Randall Arendt*

## 5. STRATEGIC ISSUES

During the planning process several issues were identified that impact the entire planning jurisdiction. These issues are better addressed at the City level than within the four individual planning districts that will be discussed in Section 7. The issues were identified during Steering Committee meetings, at the Town Meeting, and during the Planning District Sub-committee meetings.

The issues are:

- Land Use and Management Systems
- Downtown
- Transportation

### 5.1 LAND USE and MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Goal:

1. Improve the community's appearance to assure that Graham maintains its "small town" charm.

Strategies:

1. Hire a part-time zoning enforcement officer to enforce zoning ordinance.
2. Implement design standards for future development.
3. Develop a community appearance competition for residential and commercial development to be administered by the Appearance Commission.

Goal:

2. Reduce the proliferation of commercial strip development occurring along Graham's major thoroughfares.

Strategies:

1. Steer new commercial development into commercial centers identified within each planning district.
2. Develop Overlay Zoning Districts to raise the standards of development along Graham's major thoroughfares.
3. Rezone commercial property that is vacant or not being used for a commercial purpose to residential if it is not within an identified commercial center.

## 5.2 DOWNTOWN

Goal:

1. Continue efforts at revitalizing the downtown Central Business District.

Strategies:

1. Develop a City sponsored grant program for façade and sign improvements.
2. Continue efforts begun under the Graham Downtown Vision's Project within the public and private realm.
3. Work in conjunction with the downtown businesses to have utilities placed underground.

Goal:

2. Increase regional awareness of downtown as a potential shopping and tourist destination.

Strategies:

1. Develop "Historic Walk Guide" to be available throughout the City.
2. Obtain a "State Historic Site" sign along the interstate to recognize the Courthouse Square and North Graham Historic District's.
3. Develop events in addition to "Arts Around the Square" in cooperation with downtown businesses.

## 5.3 TRANSPORTATION

Goal:

1. Increase the number of alternative routes throughout the City.

Strategies:

1. Promote interconnectivity within new residential and commercial developments.
2. Develop a City Street Plan to work in conjunction with the adopted Thoroughfare Plan to have minor roads built by developers.
3. Discourage the use of cul-de-sacs within new development.

Goal:

2. Improve the walkability of the City.

Strategies:

1. Adopt Sidewalk Plan to showcase where additional pedestrian walkways should be built in the future.

2. Require new development to include sidewalks that are part of the adopted Sidewalk Plan.
3. Promote development that utilizes pedestrian walkways to connect with adjacent land uses.



## **6. GOALS TO GUIDE US INTO THE FUTURE**

In order to provide a foundation for the creation of the more specific Planning District Plans, the following goals were created to highlight the major consensus points that were reached during the planning process. These goals represent the ideals of the community and offer some general guidance when making development decisions. All of these goals should be used to critique development proposals.

### **6.1 ENVIRONMENT**

Mission Statement: “To preserve our natural, cultural, and historic resources for future generations.”

#### **6.1.1 Natural Resources**

- Support efforts to protect sensitive natural resources including wetlands, waterways, slopes, floodplains, etc.
- Encourage the restoration of creeks and streams that aid in the control of storm water runoff.
- Increase the Haw River’s role within the City’s planning jurisdiction.

#### **6.1.2 Cultural/Historic Resources**

- Continue to support efforts that identify, restore and/or reuse cultural and historic structures, buildings, monuments, and neighborhoods.
- Promote Graham’s Cultural and Historic Resources as a potential tourist destination. (i.e. Arts, Around the Square, Alamance County Arts Council, Downtown, Providence Church, etc.)
- Discourage the destruction of cultural and historic resources within the Planning area.

#### **6.1.3 Community Character**

- Encourage development that compliments existing architectural designs of the neighborhood.
- Adopt and enforce community appearance standards that help to improve the aesthetics of the City.
- Enforce landscaping standards to help beautify and buffer development sites.
- Encourage the placement of utility wires underground.
- Promote the incorporation of street trees along new roads and the extension or widening of existing roads.

### **6.2 URBAN SERVICES**

Mission Statement: “To provide effective and efficient services for all.”

### 6.2.1 Transportation

- Encourage the creation and use of alternative forms of transportation regionally and within the planning area.
- Adopt a sidewalk and bicycle plan for the City that will outline desired locations for new sidewalks and bicycle paths.
- Promote development that reduces the number of trips generated by incorporating multiple uses at one site.
- Require interconnectivity between subdivisions.
- Reduce and restrict the number of curb cuts and driveways along major arterials.

### 6.2.2 Water/Sewer Service

- Water and sewer service shall be encouraged in areas where it is economically feasible and beneficial to the City and residents.
- Promote the continued cooperation between Graham and the surrounding municipalities in offering water and sewer connections that help to defray the cost of providing services.
- Discourage the extension of water and sewer service into areas that are not prime for development

### 6.2.3 Community Facilities

- Provide various and adequate community facilities for all residents throughout the City (i.e. Senior Citizens Center).
- Plan for the construction of new facilities in areas of the City that are lacking facilities.
- Encourage the utilization of existing facilities that can be used for multiple purposes.

## 6.3 LAND USE

Mission Statement: “To promote responsible development patterns that add value to the community.”

### 6.3.1 Residential Development

- Continue to promote the single-family home
- Encourage the conversion and development of higher density residential development around the downtown and other designated activity areas.
- Prohibit residential development that is in close proximity to incompatible uses or provide proper buffering to protect existing uses and new development.
- Improve community aesthetics within established residential areas.
- Continue to protect established residential areas from incremental rezonings to a lower land use.

#### 6.3.2 Commercial Development

- Encourage commercial development within designated village centers as opposed to continued commercial strip development.
- Prohibit the encroachment of commercial development into established or planned residential areas.
- Increase the overall retail diversity throughout the City.
- Emphasize that downtown is the commercial center of the City.
- Encourage commercial development that utilizes effective landscaping and buffering to aid in improving the overall aesthetics of the community.

#### 6.3.3 Industrial Development

- Promote “clean” industries that balance economic development with environmental concerns.
- Encourage new industries to locate within existing industrial parks within the City or designated areas located on the future development map.
- Prohibit the encroachment of industrial development into non-industrial areas.

#### 6.3.4 Mixed Use Development

- Encourage the development of mixed-use projects that combine compatible uses within one site.
- Promote the location of mixed-use development at designated village centers.

#### 6.3.5 Office/Institutional Development

- Office and Institutional Development shall be encouraged to develop within the Central Business District (CBD).
- Emphasize the importance of Graham’s CBD as the seat of City and County Government.
- “Promote planned office parks within the City as opposed to linear office complexes.” (Salisbury)

#### 6.3.6 Agricultural/Rural Development

- Discourage high-density development in the agricultural/rural areas of the planning jurisdiction.
- Conserve important agricultural and rural landscapes within the planning jurisdiction.

#### 6.3.7 Open Space/Recreation

- Plan for adequate recreational facilities to serve all parts of the City.
- Encourage the incorporation of open space design within new developments.
- Promote a greenway system that links together the City’s recreational resources.

#### 6.3.8 Economic Development

- Provide support and assistance to the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce's efforts.
- Encourage the reuse and revitalization of unused or underutilized structures and properties.
- Promote new and expanding businesses which: help to diversify the local economy, utilize a higher skilled labor force, increase the prosperity of City residents and are not detrimental to the environment.

## 7. PLANNING DISTRICT GUIDELINES

### 7.1 PLANNING AREAS

The City of Graham Planning jurisdiction has been divided into four individual districts to plan for the future growth of the City. These four areas are (see map on the following page):

- North Graham
- Central Graham
- South Graham
- Hawfields

### 7.2 PLANNING DISTRICT COMPONENTS

#### 7.2.1 Public Involvement

During January 2000 four Planning District Subcommittee meetings were held to create the individual growth plan for each district. These meetings were held at Graham City Hall and the participants included members of the Graham Growth Management Steering Committee, residents of Graham and the surrounding areas, and the planning staff. Each meeting lasted approximately two and half-hours.

#### 7.2.2 Maps

The following maps were examined during each of the Planning District Subcommittee meetings to provide a foundation for the development of individual planning district guidelines.

1. Existing Land Use
2. Existing Zoning
3. Water System
4. Sewer System
5. Thoroughfare Plan
6. Topography and Hydrology
7. Steepness of Slopes
8. Physical Development Limitations

These maps provide useful insight into the land use patterns, availability of services, planned road improvements, and potential development sites in each planning district.

#### 7.2.3 Development Toolkit

A “Development Toolkit” has been created to provide a method of discussing what types of land uses should be encouraged within Graham. The toolkit describes 15 different types of land uses ranging from a Town Center to Rural Residential. Each development type has a description, location requirements, size, service area, and spacing recommendations, appropriate and inappropriate uses, and design guidelines. In addition,

illustrations and photographs of each development type are included in the plan to help the user visualize what the developments should look like. The illustrations should be used to educate developers on how future developments should look in Graham.

The Planning District Guidelines for each district use the “Development Toolkit” to create maps highlighting where each development type should be encouraged. The maps are guides that provide approximate locations for future development; the maps do not take the place of the official zoning map. However, in order to foster the goals of the plan amendments to the zoning map should be considered to make it coincide with the individual planning district plans.

#### 7.2.3.1 *Development Types*

The following list is a compilation of the different development types that are presented on the Graham Growth Management Future Land Use Map.

*Town Center-* The historic center of town, incorporating a traditional mix of commercial, office, institutional, residential, and open space uses. The pedestrian scaled development and use of complimentary buildings creates a unique atmosphere that separates the Town Center from other districts. The Town Center services the entire community and should be seen as the center of civic life. Design characteristics for future development should focus on the traditional, pedestrian oriented downtowns of the early 1900’s. Some specific attributes to be considered are sidewalks, street trees, storefronts, and complementary building styles.



*Village Center-* The public/commercial focal point within an individual planning district, providing a mix of commercial, office, institutional, residential and open space uses. The development should be designed with both the pedestrian and automobile in mind. Appropriate connections to adjacent residential areas should be encouraged. Village Centers should be primarily located along major intersections and should predominately serve local traffic. The Village Center has a mix of uses contained within the development and a limited number of controlled access points to reduce curb cuts and strip development. In addition, the Village Center encourages the use of multi-family (i.e. apartments, townhouses, and condo's) development around the outskirts of the commercial core. Design should emphasize the creation of a unique public realm, defined by two-story buildings close to the street and inviting storefronts.



*Neighborhood Center-* The public/commercial focal point within one or more neighborhoods that provides a mix of commercial, office, institutional, and residential uses at the neighborhood scale. The development should be designed to compliment the surrounding neighborhood, while offering a corner store for the residents. Neighborhood Centers should be primarily located at the intersection of major roads and should encompass one quadrant of the intersection. The goal of the Neighborhood Center is to offer local residents an opportunity to shop for everyday items close to home. The development should be designed to include one and two story structures that are close to the street and built at the pedestrian scale. Automobile and pedestrian connections should be provided to surrounding developments.



*Highway Commercial-* A commercial development that places an emphasis on the automobile and is usually characterized by numerous curb cuts, a linear pattern of development and large amounts of parking in front of the structures. Highway Commercial development is usually located along major roads that coincide with areas of existing strip development. The goal of the Highway Commercial district should be to minimize the number of curb cuts, move parking to the rear or sides of structures, and try to encourage more interconnectivity between uses. In addition, efforts should be made to reduce this type of development due to the concerns expressed by citizens during numerous public forums.



*Regional Commercial Center-* A regions commercial center, that is usually anchored by one or more “big-box” retailers and accompanying smaller businesses. These centers are usually located at an Interstate interchange and a major thoroughfare. Development is usually contained within one large site and is heavily influenced by the automobile. Regional Commercial Centers should be designed with the pedestrian in mind and structures should be built to an appropriate scale. Large amounts of continuous blank walls should be discouraged in favor of the creation of multiple storefronts. The design of the development should try to incorporate local or regional architectural styles. Connectivity to adjacent land uses should be encouraged for both pedestrian and automobile traffic.





*Regional Employment Center-* An area designed for office parks, research campuses, and some limited light industry. These centers service business and corporations that wish to be located within close proximity to the Interstate while still maintaining a campus like atmosphere. The development usually includes amenities for workers including trails, picnic areas and open space. A special emphasis should be placed on landscaping and building design to incorporate the natural features into each site design. These centers will serve as a major employment source in the future.



*Regional Industrial Center-* Areas developed for the manufacturing and processing of goods. These centers are characterized by the need for larger sites and transportation access. The Regional Industrial Centers should be designated to Industrial Parks and historic industrial areas of the City. The primary design element for these developments is buffering. Development should make sure to be buffered and screened from adjacent residential and commercial. These centers are the home of heavy industrial uses.



*Neighborhood Residential-* The residential areas of the City that are the most dense and closest in proximity to commercial areas and major thoroughfares. An example of a Neighborhood Residential district is North Main Street. The district is characterized by its variety of residential types including single-family homes and town houses. The district includes small neighborhood or “pocket” parks that service the needs of local residents. Design of these developments should emphasize smaller lots, building placement close to the street, interconnectivity between neighborhoods, sidewalks, and street trees. The goal of this district is to create a “sense of place” and a pedestrian friendly atmosphere at a higher density.



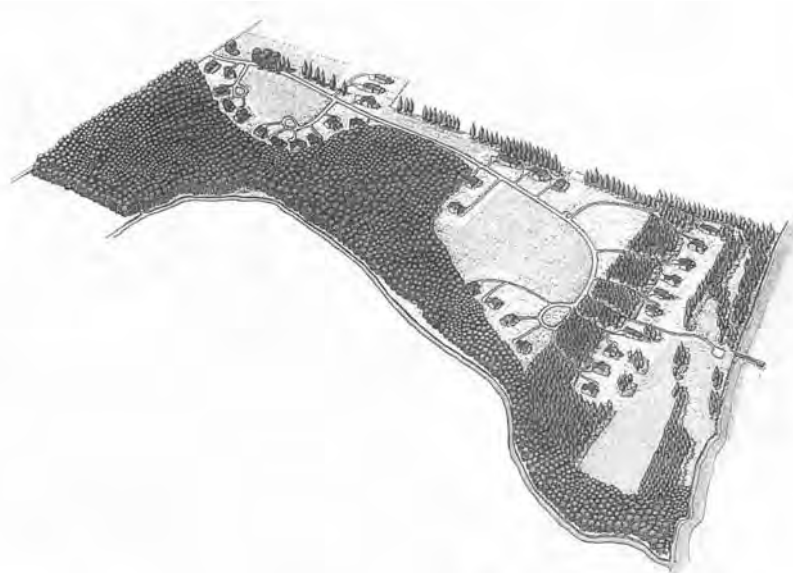
*Suburban Residential-* A district that provides for the development of conventional subdivisions at medium to low densities. These areas are usually located outside the commercial areas of the City and are serviced by water and sewer. Future developments should look to provide sidewalks and connectivity between adjacent properties. In addition, the preservation of open space along undevelopable land should be encouraged. This has been the predominate development type over the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*Rural Residential*- Areas designed for residential purposes that preserve the existing rural character, while offering larger lots. These districts are usually located on the outskirts of the urban area and are not serviced by water and sewer. The Rural Residential district is developed at a low to medium density. Design of the development should seek to maximize the preservation of the rural character and preserve open space.



*Conservation Residential*- This district is designated to provide for low-density single-family residential development that seeks to promote the preservation of environmentally significant areas. The development should be located in environmentally sensitive areas, important rural landscapes, and in areas that are not serviced by water and sewer. The goal of the district is to provide the developer with the same overall density but also preserve 50% of the land as open space. An example would be that on a normal 10-acre tract you are allowed to have 10 – 1-acre lots according to the ordinance. A Conservation Residential district would allow those same 10 dwelling units but on ½ acre lots with the remaining 5 acres being permanently preserved as open space. The benefits to the community include the preservation of open space, while the developer gets to put in fewer roads, less water and sewer if applicable, and offer new residents open space. When designing the development the most environmentally sensitive areas should be preserved.





*Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)*- A development that offers a mixture of commercial, office, and institutional uses within a variety of residential densities and building types. The TND is reminiscent of early town development before all uses were separated into different parts of the city. This development offers residents an opportunity to live, work, and shop all within the same development. A key attribute of the TND is the focus on pedestrians and creating a community that accommodates the automobile as well as the pedestrian. In addition to having a mixture of residential and commercial uses, these developments also include parks, open space, and other amenities such as schools and churches. The TND looks to create a town within a town.



*Park-* Areas designated for recreational activities, either passive or active. Parks should be located in close proximity to residential areas. Smaller parks may be part of a development while larger citywide parks should be strategically placed to serve the entire community. The design of parks should include multiple access points and transportation options.



*Open Space-* Areas designed for permanent protection from development. These areas could be of significant environmental, cultural, historic, or local value. Open space areas should look to preserve the areas in their natural state while allowing for recreational opportunities when appropriate.





*Greenways*- Areas designed to provide public access along waterways and scenic corridors. These areas offer recreational opportunities as well as environmental. The development of natural greenways along waterways help to provide a riparian buffer that will reduce urban runoff into creeks, streams, and rivers. Greenways are usually found along waterways within the floodplain, where no development is allowed to occur. The key design issue is to preserve as much as the natural environment as possible.



The chart on the following page provides a list of the characteristics of each Development Type that have been discussed. This chart can be used as a reference checklist when examining proposed developments.

## 7.3 NORTH GRAHAM PLANNING DISTRICT

### 7.3.1 Background

The North Graham Planning District contains the historic core of the City. A wide variety of land uses are found within the district including: the Central Business District (CBD), established and historic residential areas, industrial operations, and a wide variety of commercial businesses. The major thoroughfares through the district are NC 87, NC 49, and NC 54. The streets follow a grid system that allows for numerous routes between locations.

The district is the most urban of the four planning districts and was developed along traditional neighborhood development principles. Most of the area was developed before the 1950's. The district also has two historic districts and numerous structures that are eligible for nomination to the National Register.

### 7.3.2 Boundaries

The boundaries for the district are Interstate 40/85 on the south, the City limits of Graham to the west, the City limits of Burlington and Haw River to the north, and the Haw River to the east. A map of the planning district can be found on the following page.

### 7.3.3 Existing and Emerging Conditions

1. Downtown revitalization efforts have begun to attract developers and businesses.
2. A multitude of infill opportunities are available throughout the planning district for residential, industrial and commercial developments.
3. Existing infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, roads, parks, etc.) reduces the costs of new development.
4. Many areas need reinvestment to help improve community appearance.
5. Commercial strip development has begun to infringe on residential areas.
6. Older industrial facilities are still providing employment opportunities to residents.
7. Historic resources within the district should be capitalized on.

### 7.3.4 Planning District Growth Management Plan

The North Graham Planning District encompasses the traditional center of commerce, government, and industry in Graham. In order to enhance and preserve the valuable resources within the district it is recommended that the following efforts be undertaken.

#### 7.3.4.1 *Policies and Recommendations*

1. Encourage infill development within the district, as well as redevelopment efforts of deteriorating structures.
2. Create more neighborhood (“pocket parks”) parks within the district on vacant and underdeveloped lots.

3. Preserve established residential neighborhoods within the district.
4. Improve enforcement of existing zoning ordinance to improve community appearance.
5. Prohibit the continuation of additional commercial strip development along major thoroughfares.
6. Continue to encourage the redevelopment efforts underway within the Town Center.
7. Promote the Town Center as the commercial and governmental center of Graham.
8. Create alternative routes for commercial traffic through the Town Center.
9. Adopt an Overlay Zoning District for the major thoroughfares within the district that will place additional development standards on top of existing zoning requirements. Additional requirements could include: design criteria, building orientation, landscaping, signage controls, and limited curb cuts.
10. Encourage tourism within the Town Center through promotional campaigns that highlight the Court House Square and North Main Street Historic Districts.
11. Initiate a corridor improvement program for the Town Center and South Main Street that will place utilities underground, improve pedestrian crossings, and construct a landscaped median on South Main Street.
12. Promote homeownership within the district as a way to protect established neighborhoods from down zoning.

#### *7.3.4.2 Planning District Growth Management Map*

The following map depicts the desired location for future development within the North Graham Planning District. Some areas show a continuation of the existing uses and others represent a change in the existing use of the land.



## 7.4 CENTRAL GRAHAM PLANNING DISTRICT

### 7.4.1 Background

The Central Graham Planning District contains the area associated with the first suburban growth in the City of Graham. The district is composed of a variety of land uses including commercial, residential, and industrial uses. A majority of the district is developed with relatively few large undeveloped tracts of land. The major thoroughfares within the district are NC 87, NC 54, and Gilbreath Street. Commercial strip development can be found along South Main Street. Areas directly behind the commercial developments range from multi-family apartments to cul-de-sac subdivisions.

### 7.4.2 Boundaries

The boundaries of the district are Interstate 40/85 on the north, the Haw River to the east, and the Burlington/Graham City limits to the west. The southern boundary for the Central Graham district is Hanford Road, Moore Street and Cheeks Lane to the Haw River.

### 7.4.3 Existing and Emerging Conditions

1. Incremental rezonings along South Main Street have led to the proliferation of commercial strip development.
2. Vacant land is beginning to be developed at higher densities (i.e. multi-family and smaller single-family lots).
3. An increase in the number of multi-family rezoning requests.
4. Widening of NC 54 will place development pressures similar to that seen along South Main Street.
5. Entire Planning District is without adequate recreational facilities.
6. Commercial and multi-family developments have begun to infringe upon established single-family residential areas.
7. Most of the district is furnished with water and sewer.

### 7.4.4 Planning District Growth Management Plan

The Central Graham Planning District Growth Management Plan addresses the existing and emerging conditions of the district and creates a better sense of place through managed growth. In order to accomplish this task it is recommended that the following Policies & Recommendations and the Growth Management Map be followed.

#### 7.4.4.1 *Policies and Recommendations*

1. Ensure that development along Highway 54 does not replicate the highway commercial/strip development characteristic of South Main Street. This can be accomplished by promoting nodal development through a regional commercial center and village center with sufficient separation between centers. A regional commercial center could include a major anchor store(s) interspersed with smaller

commercial activities, office and institutional uses, multi-family, and governmental facilities located within an integrated complex.

2. Limit direct highway access or the number of curb cuts to commercial activities by directing development to proposed regional and village centers and requiring internal connectivity between commercial uses, as well as uniformity in design standards.
3. Provide a transitional buffer between the proposed commercial and village centers and existing or proposed single-family neighborhoods that would consist of landscaping, multi-family developments and/or townhouse developments.
4. Adopt an Overlay Zoning District for the Highway 54 and South Main Street corridors that would apply additional development standards to regulate building design and construction, site layout, landscaping, signage, and traffic patterns.
5. Develop and promote a greenway system along rivers, creeks, and tributaries to provide recreational opportunities for residents and protect environmentally sensitive areas. These corridors would also protect scenic areas for the community and provide a natural buffer for waterways.
6. Develop a community park to serve the district, which could include a recreation/community center building, fields, hard surface courts, and picnicking areas. The area south of Interstate 40/85 has been largely under-served with recreational facilities and there is a growing need for such a center in this district.
7. Encourage residential development that conserves land along rivers, creeks, and tributaries to protect environmentally sensitive areas, promote open space preservation, and provide a natural buffer for waterways.
8. Encourage neighborhood residential development in remaining undeveloped areas that are adjacent to existing residential developments. Additionally, interconnectivity between neighborhoods should be a priority for new developments.

#### *7.4.4.2 Planning District Growth Management Map*

The following map depicts the desired location for future development within the Central Graham Planning District. Some areas show a continuation of existing uses and others represent a change in the existing use of the land.

## 7.5 SOUTH GRAHAM PLANNING DISTRICT

### 7.5.1 Background

The South Graham Planning District is primarily composed of residential development, but was predominately rural until approximately twenty years ago. There is little to no commercial or industrial development within the district. The major thoroughfares include Rogers Road, South Main Street (NC 87), and Swepsonville Road. The land west of NC 87 has water and sewer available, whereas well and septic fields serve the eastern part of the district. This has resulted in more rapid development in the western part of the district at higher densities.

### 7.5.2 Boundaries

The boundaries of the district are the Burlington/Graham extra-territorial jurisdiction line to the west, the Haw River to the east and just below the Great Alamance Creek to the south. The northern boundary of the district is Hanford Road, Moore Street, and Cheeks Lane to the Haw River.

### 7.5.3 Existing and Emerging Conditions

1. District has no commercial center to provide residents with access to daily needs.
2. Half of the planning district has water and sewer.
3. The residential development that has occurred within the district is of a high quality.
4. There is an abundance of vacant land that will face increasing development pressure.
5. The Thoroughfare Plan shows a major new facility being constructed within the district.
6. The district contains numerous waterways that range from small creeks to the Great Alamance Creek.
7. The district does not have an east-west connector to link the two halves of the district.

### 7.5.4 Planning District Growth Management Plan

The Growth Management Plan for the South Graham District includes Policies and Recommendations that should be considered when reviewing proposed developments with the district as well as a Growth Management Map that should be used to direct growth.

#### 7.5.4.1 *Policies and Recommendations*

1. Improve the transportation network to allow for east-west corridors in the southern section of Graham, which would alleviate pressures on South Main Street and offer residents alternative transportation routes.

2. Encourage commercial development in the district in village and neighborhood centers to serve the residents of South Graham. This pattern should be promoted over the highway commercial/strip development that has occurred along South Main Street.
3. Expand the jurisdictional boundaries of Graham in order to ensure consistent development patterns along the existing boundaries of the district.
4. Expand the greenway system along rivers, creeks, and tributaries to encourage open space preservation, floodplain protection, and offer residents additional areas for recreational activities.
5. Develop neighborhood and community parks, where appropriate, to provide additional recreational alternatives for residents of the district. Particular emphasis should be placed on using land that is currently owned by the City along the Haw River.
6. Encourage conservation residential development along rivers, creeks, and tributaries to protect environmentally sensitive areas from excessive development and to offer residents of the community larger areas of open space for recreation.
7. Include neighborhood residential development in the district to compliment existing residential areas and encourage interconnectivity between neighborhoods. These developments should be located in close proximity to a village center or neighborhood centers to promote pedestrian access and decrease automobile trip lengths and travel times.

*7.5.4.2 Planning District Growth Management Map*

The following map depicts the desired location for future development within the South Graham Planning District. Some areas show a continuation of the existing uses and others represent a change in the existing use of the land.

## 7.6 HAWFIELDS PLANNING DISTRICT

### 7.6.1 Background

The Hawfields Planning District is located to the east of the Haw River, between Graham and Mebane. The district is home to the Alamance Community College (ACC) and is known for its rural character. A small portion of the district is located north of the Interstate and has begun to develop around the Jimmie Kerr interchange. The district is characterized by its large open spaces, rural agricultural heritage, and lack of commercial development. The major thoroughfares within the district include, Jimmie Kerr Road, Cherry Lane, Trollingwood Road, and North Jim Minor Road. The area has not seen a lot of development pressure because it is lacking adequate public services.

### 7.6.2 Boundaries

The district is comprised of the land east of the Haw River, south of the Town of Haw River, west of NC 119 and north of the Town of Swepsonville.

### 7.6.3 Existing and Emerging Conditions

1. The Thoroughfare Plan shows Cherry Lane being widened and a new interchange being created at the Interstate and Cherry Lane.
2. A large portion of the district is without sewer and has very little water available.
3. The district has an abundance of large tracts of vacant land.
4. The district is largely undeveloped which allows for a vision to be created for the entire area.
5. Incremental rezonings and subdivisions can lead to unplanned growth.
6. The Interstate access and ACC offer a number of opportunities for future employment growth.
7. Widening of NC 54 will add pressure to the district due to the proximity of the Hawfields area to the Interstate.

### 7.6.4 Planning District Growth Management Plan

The Hawfields Planning District presents a unique opportunity to the City of Graham. The district is largely undeveloped and presents a case in which a clear vision and good planning can create an area that adds value to the whole community. Unlike the other districts where much of the land has been developed, the Hawfields Planning District has yet to be molded. The following Policies & Recommendations and the Growth Management Map provide a guide for the future development of the area.

#### 7.6.4.1 *Policies and Recommendations*

1. Encourage the development of an office/institutional/light industrial center developed similar to a corporate campus, office park, or regional employment center. An office park or center would offer additional employment opportunities for the residents of the surrounding community and compliment the proposed traditional neighborhood development in the district.

2. Discourage highway commercial/strip development along transportation arteries and proposed interstate interchanges by directing these commercial activities to proposed village and neighborhood centers. In particular, commercial development should encourage internal access between facilities and avoid numerous curb cuts along highways.
3. Encourage a traditional neighborhood development pattern in targeted areas, which includes socio-economic diversity through a mix of housing types and price ranges. Additionally, commercial, office, and institutional uses should be incorporated into the site layout. A development of this nature should also preserve existing historical landmarks and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Intersperse neighborhood centers within traditional neighborhood developments and other residential areas to serve the daily needs of residents and encourage pedestrian access over automobile use.
5. Strategically locate village centers throughout the district to serve the needs of surrounding residents and to encourage transportation efficiencies by reducing automobile travel times and distances. Additionally, dense development patterns should be encouraged in these centers to increase pedestrian access to adjacent facilities over automobile use.
6. Encourage rural residential and conservation residential development in identified areas to preserve a portion of the rural character of the district and to protect environmentally sensitive and flood-prone areas.
7. Develop a greenway system along rivers, creeks, and tributaries to encourage open space preservation and offer residents of the district a continuous trail for recreational activities.
8. Ensure the protection and preservation of historic landmarks within the district.

#### *7.6.4.2 Planning District Growth Management Map*

The following map depicts the desired location for development within the Hawfields Planning District. The map should be used as a guide to make decisions regarding development. In some instances, the map shows the preservation of existing land uses and in others it shows the desired changes to existing conditions.

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION and REVIEW**

### **8.1 FIRST STEPS**

To aid in the effective use of the Growth Management Plan several actions will need to be taken.

- 1) Hold workshops for the City Council and Planning Board on how the plan can be used upon adoption. These workshops will review different parts of the plan during meetings.
- 2) Implement a “Staff Recommendation” or a “Staff Memo” on all new developments, rezonings, special use permits, and PUD’s. The staff recommendation will include an analysis of how the proposed development will meet the Growth Management Plan’s recommendations.
- 3) Make necessary changes to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the type of development that is desired by the community. For example, current B-2, General Business zoning would not allow a mixture of commercial and residential uses that might be found in a Village Center.
- 4) Create overlay zoning districts for high growth corridors that raise the standards for development.
- 5) Advise the City Council and Planning Board to use the Growth Management Plan when making rulings on rezonings, special use permits, and subdivisions.
- 6) Develop more detailed area plans that build upon the foundation established by the Graham Growth Management Plan (GGMP).
- 7) Inform the Alamance County Planning Department of this plan and work with them in implementing the plan outside Graham’s extra-territorial jurisdiction.

### **8.2 HOW TO USE THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

#### **8.2.1 Strategic Issues**

The Strategic Issues found in Section 5 of the GGMP include strategies for addressing three issues that were identified as concerns for the entire community. The issues are Land Use and Management Systems, the Downtown, and Transportation. By identifying these issues and developing some strategies to address them, the City is in a position to start work on reaching the goals for each issue. This section of the plan provides an opportunity for the City to begin work on something right away.

#### **8.2.2 General Goals**

The General Goals for the Environment, Urban Services, and Land Use found in Section 6 of the plan should be used as a first cut for proposed developments. The goals represent principles that affect all development within the City. If a development cannot meet these goals it should be returned to the developer for revisions.

#### **8.2.3 Planning District Guidelines**

The Planning District Guidelines should be used as a second check on any development proposal. The Planning District Guidelines include a map highlighting the location and

type of development that is to be encouraged in each of the four planning districts. In addition, each planning district has a set of Policies and Recommendations that provide a framework for making development decisions within the district.

When reviewing a proposed development the Developer, Staff, Public, Planning Board, and City Council should determine first if that type of development is desired in the location that is proposed. Secondly, check to see if the development meets the goals for the district and is consistent with the development types described within the Development Toolkit.

#### 8.2.4 Example Development Proposal

Developer X would like to rezone 2 acres along NC 54 for B-2, General Business and place a strip commercial development on the lot.

#### **The GGMP as Used by the Developer**

The developer can utilize the GGMP to see if his development proposal meets the plans General Goals, as well as the Planning District Policies and Recommendations. Before consulting the Growth Management Map the developer should make sure that the overall plan for the proposed development meets the Goals, Policies and Recommendations established in the plan. Finally, the developer can look at the Growth Management Map to see if Highway Commercial is a recommended use along NC 54.

#### **The GGMP as Used by the City Staff**

The City staff reviews zoning petitions, recommends that the petition be approved or denied, and prepares a written zoning report for the Planning Board. In making their decision and writing the report, the staff reviews relevant planning documents, including the plan adopted by the City. Using the adopted plan will facilitate the City staff's review of the rezoning request. The staff will be able to point out those goals, policies & recommendations, and location of development types that support the rezoning, and those that are in conflict with the rezoning, thereby shaping the overall staff recommendation. In addition, the staff can also use the plan to warn developers about potential conflicts before being confronted at a public hearing.

#### **The GGMP as Used by the City of Graham Planning Board**

Prior to the regular meeting, each Planning Board member can make his or her own determination as to the consistency of the proposed rezoning with the City's adopted goals, policies and recommendations, and Growth Management Map. As always, the Planning Board should take into account the recommendations of the Graham Growth Management Steering Committee in interpreting the true intent of the policies, but may choose to give different weight to different policies.



### **The GGMP as Used by the General Public**

Residents of the City of Graham can and should reference specific goals, policies and recommendations, and the Growth Management Map when speaking in favor of or in opposition to a rezoning request.

### **The GGMP as Used by the City of Graham City Council**

In its legislative authority to rezone property, the City of Graham City Council has the final word as to whether the rezoning request is consistent with the various plans that affect the property in question. The City Council should review the rezoning with the GGMP's goals, policies and recommendations, and Growth Management Map in mind. As customary, the City Council should also take into account and weigh the interpretation of policy as explained by the property owner, the Planning Board, City staff, and the general public. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a consistent foundation for decision-making.

### **8.3 REVISIONS & MONITORING**

As the GGMP is used and development occurs in Graham it will be necessary to make revisions to the plan in order to keep it updated. A major development, new road or water and sewer extension can drastically change an area of the planning jurisdiction. The Steering Committee would like to recommend that the City convene a meeting of the Graham Growth Management Plan Steering Committee once a year to look at changes that need to be addressed as well as provide an opportunity to monitor the City's progress with implementing the plan.

The City of Graham Planner will set up the yearly meeting of the Steering Committee to review and monitor the GGMP. This meeting will provide the Steering Committee an opportunity to discuss how well the plan has been implemented and review any changes that need to be made. It should be noted that the staff, Planning Board, and City Council should make minor changes to the plan as necessary.

The GGMP will only be a document worth using if it is kept up to date and used daily by the staff and monthly by the City Council and Planning Board.



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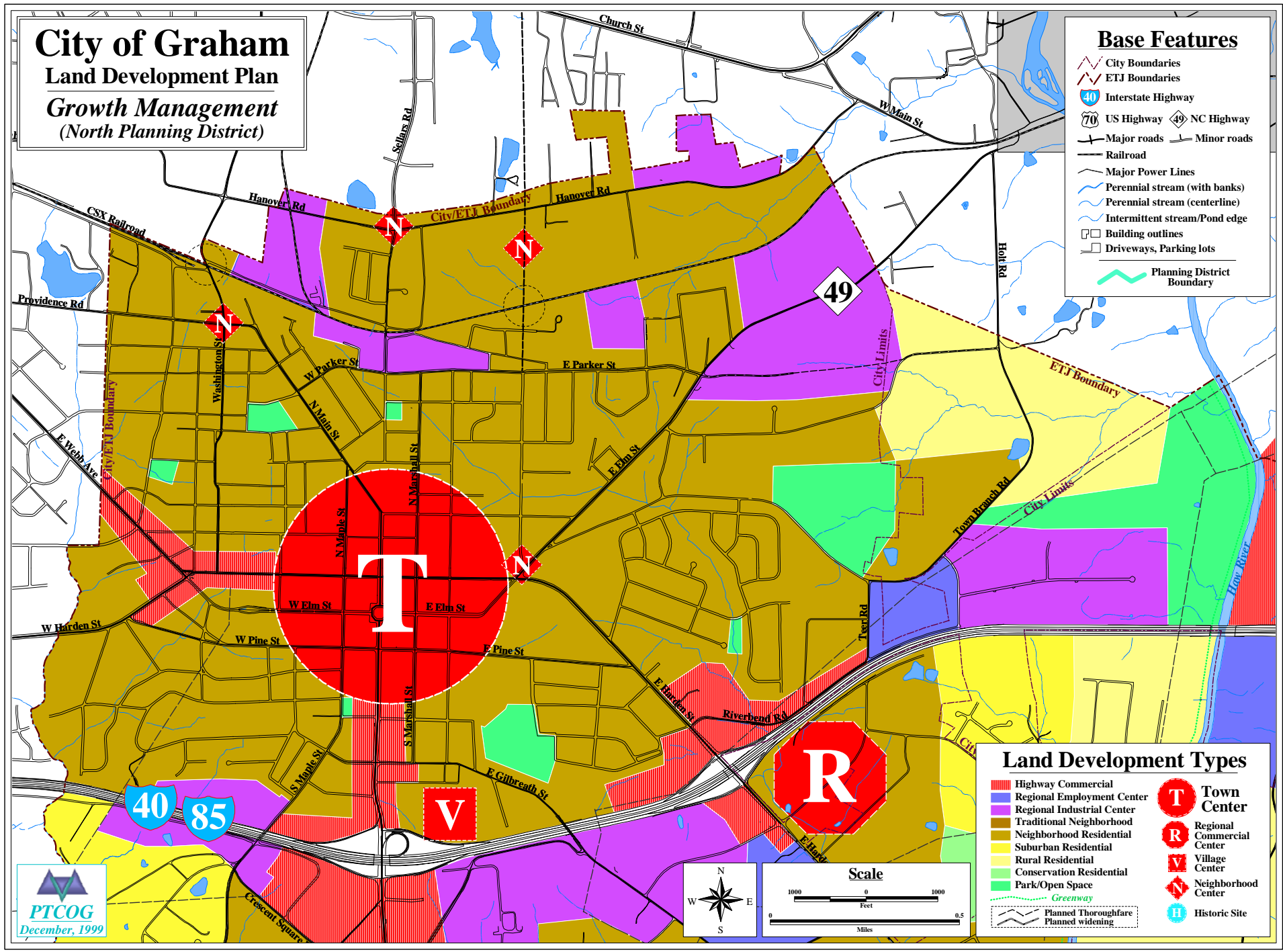
**City of Graham**  
**Land Development Plan**  
**Growth Management**  
 (North Planning District)

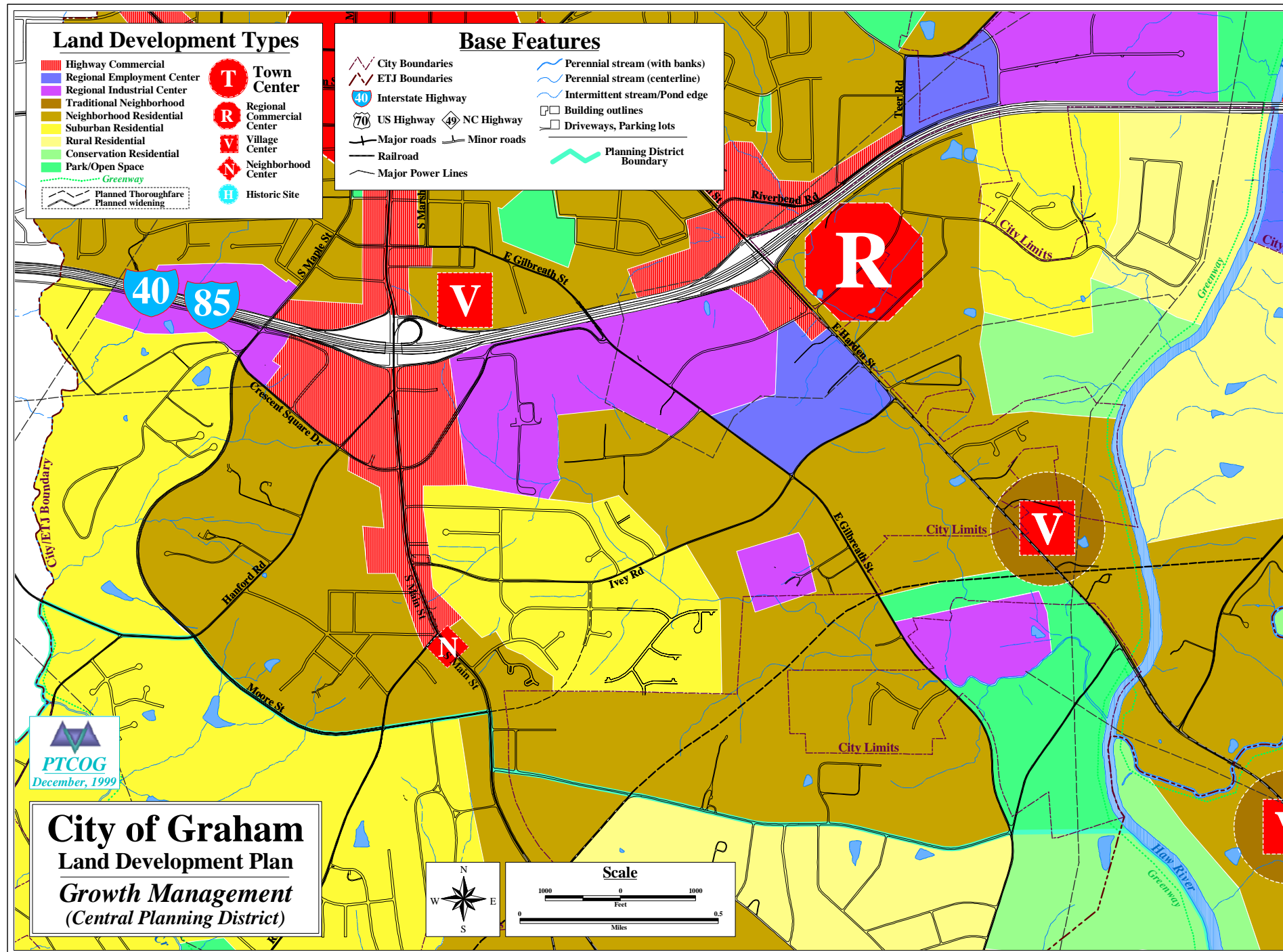
**Base Features**

- City Boundaries
- ETJ Boundaries
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway NC Highway
- Major roads Minor roads
- Railroad
- Major Power Lines
- Perennial stream (with banks)
- Perennial stream (centerline)
- Intermittent stream/Pond edge
- Building outlines
- Driveways, Parking lots
- Planning District Boundary

**Land Development Types**

- Highway Commercial
- Regional Employment Center
- Regional Industrial Center
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Rural Residential
- Conservation Residential
- Park/Open Space
- Greenway
- Planned Thoroughfare
- Planned widening
- Town Center
- Regional Commercial Center
- Village Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Historic Site







**City of Graham**  
**Land Development Plan**  
*Growth Management*  
*(South Planning District)*



**Base Features**

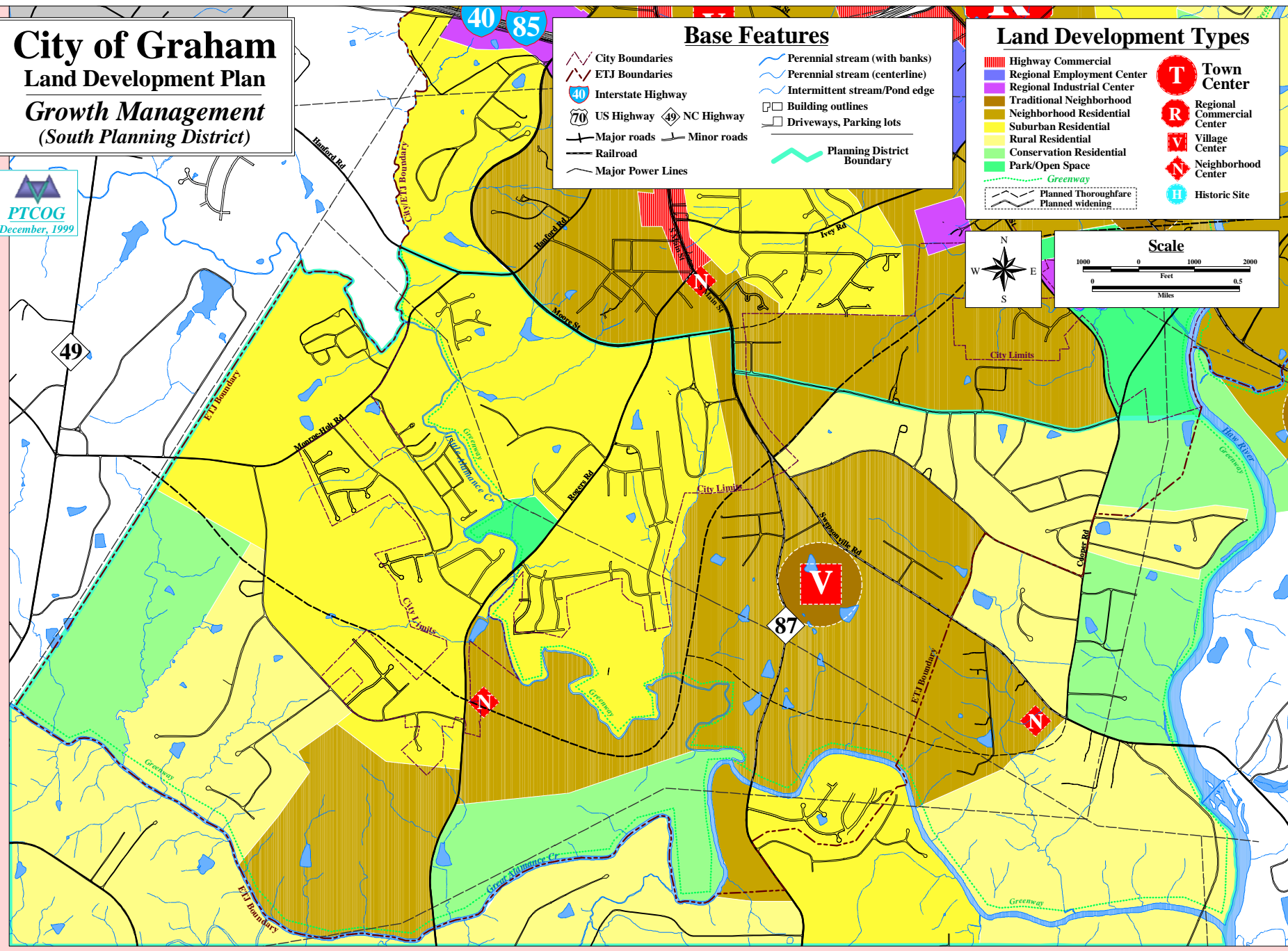
City Boundaries	Perennial stream (with banks)
ETJ Boundaries	Perennial stream (centerline)
Interstate Highway	Intermittent stream/Pond edge
US Highway	Building outlines
NC Highway	Driveways, Parking lots
Major roads	Minor roads
Railroad	Planning District Boundary
Major Power Lines	

**Land Development Types**

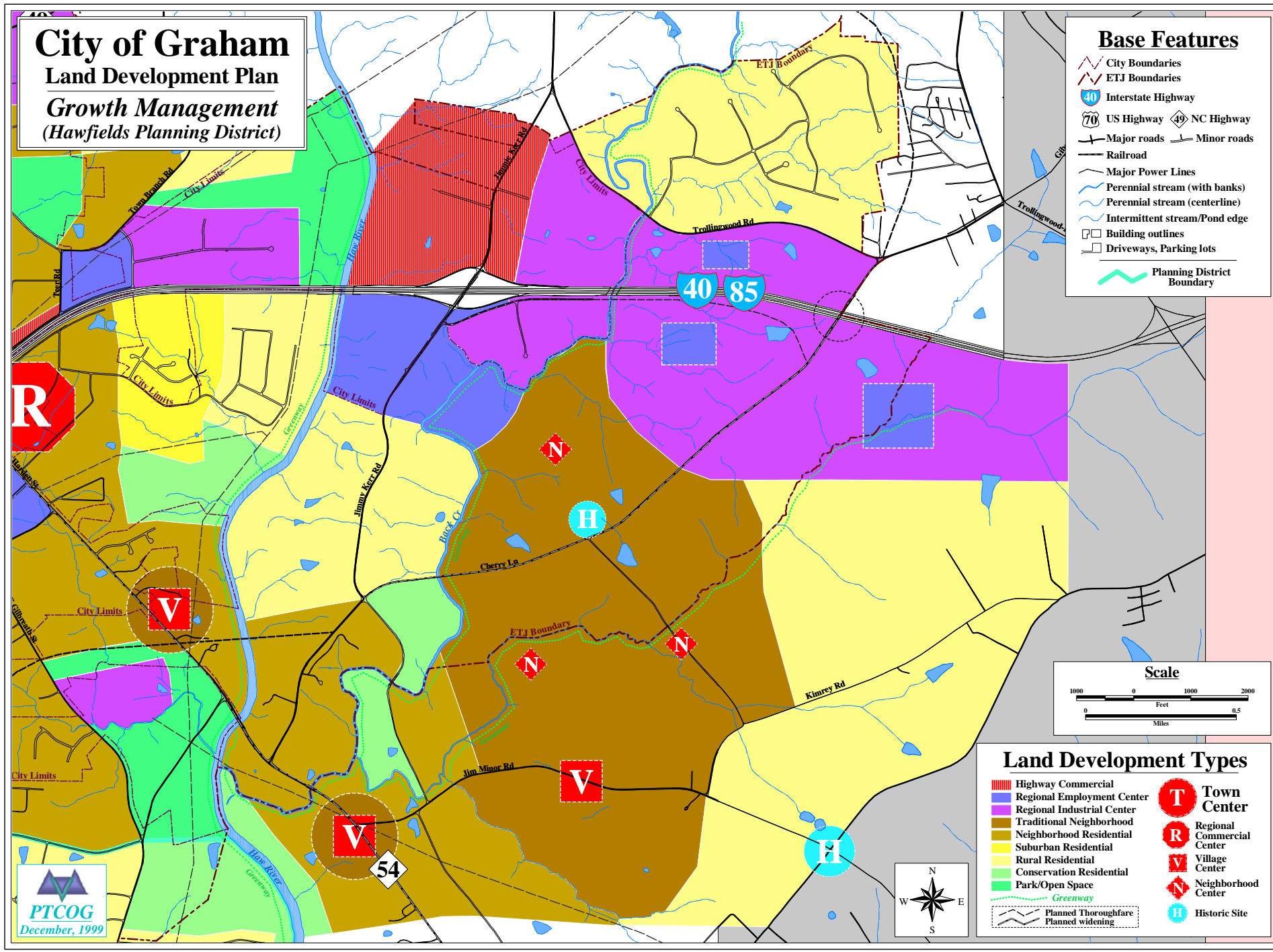
Highway Commercial	<b>T</b> Town Center
Regional Employment Center	<b>R</b> Regional Commercial Center
Regional Industrial Center	<b>V</b> Village Center
Traditional Neighborhood	<b>N</b> Neighborhood Center
Neighborhood Residential	<b>H</b> Historic Site
Suburban Residential	
Rural Residential	
Conservation Residential	
Park/Open Space	
Greenway	
Planned Thoroughfare	
Planned widening	

**Scale**

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 0 Feet  
 0 0.5  
 Miles

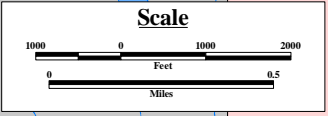


**City of Graham**  
**Land Development Plan**  
**Growth Management**  
**(Hawfields Planning District)**



**Base Features**

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- Driveways, Parking lots
- Planning District Boundary



**Land Development Types**

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- Regional Employment Center
- Regional Industrial Center
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Residential
- Suburban Residential
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- Conservation Residential
- Park/Open Space
- Greenway
- Planned Thoroughfare
- Planned widening
- Town Center
- Regional Commercial Center
- Village Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Historic Site



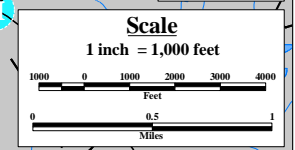
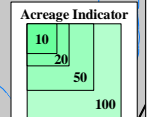
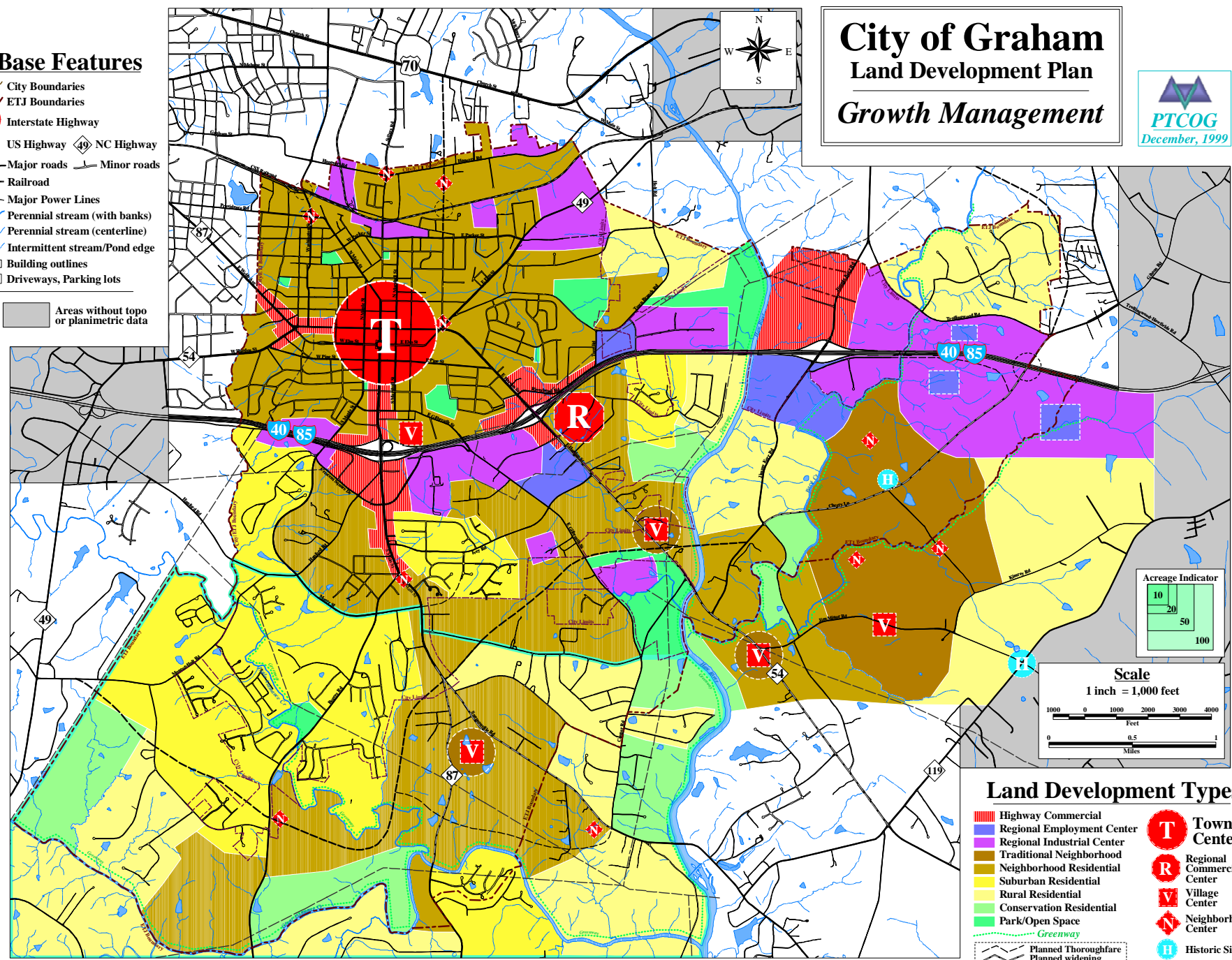


# City of Graham Land Development Plan Growth Management



## Base Features

- City Boundaries
- ETJ Boundaries
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- US Highway NC Highway
- Major roads Minor roads
- Railroad
- Major Power Lines
- Perennial stream (with banks)
- Perennial stream (centerline)
- Intermittent stream/Pond edge
- Building outlines
- Driveways, Parking lots
- Areas without topo or planimetric data



## Land Development Types

- Highway Commercial
- Regional Employment Center
- Regional Industrial Center
- Traditional Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Rural Residential
- Conservation Residential
- Park/Open Space
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- Regional Commercial Center
- Village Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Historic Site