

Memo

To: Board of Commissioners, Chatham County, NC
From: White & Smith, Project Consultant Team
CC: Chatham County Staff
Date: October 2, 2023
Re: *Plan Moncure* Planning Board Recommendation of Approval and Consideration of Modifications

Working with Chatham County Staff, the Project Consultant Team conducted an eight-month planning process to develop a small area plan for the Moncure area in the southeastern part of Chatham County. The planning process was Part Two of the overall effort initiated in April 2022, following the announcement of a major employer locating at the Triangle Innovation Point site. The announcement triggered a provision in the *Plan Chatham Comprehensive Plan* to prepare a small area plan. Part One, which was completed in nine months, considered the potential impacts of the changes resulting from the presence of an electric car manufacturing plant in the Moncure area as well as the construction activities and the infrastructure improvements in advance of the plant beginning operations. The purpose of the plan is to help empower stakeholders and Chatham County to shape the future of this area as it begins to undergo major changes as a result of this new growth.

On August 23, 2023, the Chatham County Planning Board received a presentation from the Project Consultant Team providing an overview of the first draft of the resulting small area plan document, ***Plan Moncure***. The consultants noted minor changes to the plan in response to public comments received at a public meeting held on August 9, 2023, which were outlined in a memorandum to the Planning Board, dated August 16, 2023. To fully digest the information presented in the plan, the Planning Board decided to continue its review at its meeting on September 5, 2023.

The September 5th meeting included a presentation by Green Heron Planning, a member of the consultant team, reviewing the feedback received from members of the Planning Board. Following Board discussion, the Planning Board made a motion to recommend the draft ***Plan Moncure*** small area plan for approval by the Board of Commissioners, with suggestions on possible adjustments and changes provided by individual Planning Board members. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the meeting, the Project Consultant Team and Staff reviewed the suggested adjustments and changes and, in response, we offer the following substantive modifications to the draft plan for the Board of Commissioners' consideration.

(Note: The full text of the Planning Board's comments has also been provided in the Board of Commissioners' meeting packet. If asked, the Project Consultant Team will provide responses to other comments for which a Board member would like a response.)

Section One below lists changes we consider minor and clarifying and not to require policy direction or a change of current policy. We propose to make the changes to the August 9 draft of the small area plan listed in Section One, *unless the Board directs us otherwise* at the October 2, 2023, meeting.

In Section Two, we have included suggestions from the Planning Board review process, which we felt were a matter of policy that the BOC would consider as part of its deliberations and final action. Therefore, we will make changes to the draft plan regarding the matters in Section Two *only if the BOC directs us to do so* at the meeting.

Section Three relates to comments we received that bear specifically on the ongoing development of the Unified Development Ordinance, or UDO. Most of these comments do not necessitate a change to the draft small area plan because they are generally consistent with the plan already as to the Moncure Study Area and, in most cases, involve issues that are being addressed county-wide, not just in the study area. In addition, as we note below, most were identified during the initial UDO Audit Report as key issues and are therefore already being taken up in Module 1 or Module 2 of the UDO. Nonetheless, since the comments were made and are, in fact, *key issues* in the County, we have offered a little background here on how each is being addressed in the UDO process.

Finally, Section Four notes revisions previously suggested by the Project Consultant Team in the memorandum to the Planning Board (August 16, 2023). The content of Section Four includes updates to reflect the results of the online survey, which closed on September 20, 2023.

Section One: Revisions to be Incorporated, Unless the BOC Directs Otherwise

- A. Add a more detailed table of contents.
- B. Add a one-page executive summary.
- C. Add hyperlinks to key documents and important internal cross-references in the plan.
- D. Clarify locations for apartments and hotels.
*Apartment (and other forms of multi-family development) and hotels are appropriate uses in a subset of place types. Two place type descriptions, as set forth in the draft **Plan Moncure** document as well as Plan Chatham, will be revised (*) as follows:*

Community Center - Retail hubs located along key roadway corridors, these centers accommodate regional retail tenants complemented by local-serving commercial development. The mix of uses includes retail,

restaurants, services, **lodging**, and office uses. Residential uses can include single family homes, patio/cottage homes, attached units, and multifamily units **(including apartments)**.

Employment Center - These centers are targeted for future job-generating uses in settings that meet today's workplace expectations. The mix of uses includes industrial, office, and supporting retail, restaurant, service, recreation, **and lodging, and other uses. Residential uses may include attached units (townhomes) and multifamily units (e.g., apartments, lofts, and upper floor units) provided residential development is incorporated into the Employment Center on parcel(s) that meet specific criteria (e.g., proximity and access to US-1) and such development becomes a supporting use, as defined in the UDO.**

**Refer to "C" under Section Two below for more about residential uses in an Employment Center.*

*[Note: As part of the implementation of **Plan Moncure**, County staff or the UDO consultant team may wish to revisit Module 1 of the UDO, presented in March 2023, which set out a slate of draft zoning districts – some current, some new – and associated land use tables. The current zoning code and the UDO, once adopted by the BOC, proscribe in which zoning districts apartments and hotels are permitted.]*

- E. Consider revising language to mention a mile range of new greenway trails without specifying a single number of miles.

*The callout box on page 29 will be revised to describe each measure (potential changes in numbers pertaining to public safety personnel, park acres, greenway miles, and school space; potential changes in assessed value ratio; potential acreage protected for agriculture; potential acreage of encroachment on natural heritage areas; potential acreage of impervious area; and potential net change in ad valorem tax revenue) rather than report the future needs based on the preferred scenario. Appendix D provides the model results with the needs calculated for each of the scenarios (A, B, C, D, and P). Also, a footnote will be added to both this callout box and Appendix D, indicating the intended use of the results: comparing scenarios and understanding trade-offs. Actual future needs shall be determined by the departments and agencies responsible for delivering facilities and services through their respective facilities plans, which are periodically updated and should be modified to respond to the Vision in **Plan Moncure**, once adopted.*

- F. Include brief general description of expected uncertainty in growth estimates. Language from the Market Assessment (Appendix B) will be added to the plan to explain the use of growth estimates in this planning process. (Note: Circumstances in the Moncure area can and will change. In an effort to anticipate potential changes the southeastern part of the county is facing over the next two decades, the Project Consultant Team examined the existing and future market conditions to determine a range of projections for the housing and non-residential space demand through 2040. The projections are based on assumptions, which rely on

the best available data at the time the study is conducted, including historical trends, employment plans from VinFast, and market data for the Research Triangle region. Substantial shifts in market conditions that were not anticipated at the time the plan was developed may warrant an update to the small area plan in the future.)

- G. Show the Distribution of Place Type Categories on the Vision Map, indicating the percentages allocated to the various place types as previously shown for all the scenarios.
- H. Strengthen/clarify language on page 11 regarding environmental protection and the role of the regulatory process.
- I. Make the changes listed in Section Four.

Section Two: Revisions Subject to BOC Direction

- A. Change to the Vision Map to reduce or expand the “Community Center” place type designation.

The application of “Community Center” to the Vision Map was determined based on the suitability analysis, which indicated that relatively undeveloped sites on the north side of—and with direct access to—US-1 are highly suited for commercial development. Based on the findings presented in the Market Assessment report (Appendix B), the Moncure area can support just over 500,000 square feet of commercial space (retail, restaurant, office, and service uses) over the next two decades. Assuming much of the projected commercial development would be concentrated in a mixed-use form using a combination of single- and multi-story buildings (consistent with more recent development on comparable sites in the region), the total land area required to accommodate the highest end of the range projected for new development would most likely not exceed 250 acres (including areas for surface parking and open space set aside within). The two areas delineated encompass approximately 480 acres combined, which includes parcels already developed for or zoned for business uses, and they allow for additional development beyond the forecast year of 2040 as well as sufficient land area to integrate multi-family and attached single-family housing units within a reasonable walking distance (typically up to 1/2 mile). Concentrations in these locations should reduce pressure for commercial development elsewhere in the Moncure area. Furthermore, “Community Center” is limited to the locations shown so as to recognize the high suitability of the land and to not diminish the opportunity they offer in creating viable business locations with an overabundance of supply.

- B. Expand recommendations in the Action Steps section:
 - a. Develop a Chatham Land Trust and a conservation credit system.
 - b. Facilitate mobility through an expansion of Chatham Transit service in the Moncure area.
See also existing Action Item 10.4 – Conduct Microtransit Feasibility Study.
 - c. Include a recommendation that National Register historic sites be protected.
See also existing Action Item 11.1 – Cultural Heritage Plan and 11.2 – Explore National Register Listings.

- d. Consider gathering more information from the Sheriff's Department about their interest in setting aside space for Sheriff's substation in the Moncure area.
See also existing Action Item 4.5 – Explore Possible Sheriff Substation.
- e. Consider including more information on the protection of natural resources and natural diversity of the Rocky River.
- C. Expand the description of the "Employment Center" place type to explicitly name types of housing that may be appropriate as a supporting, compatible use within these areas delineated in the Future Land Use & Conservation ("Vision") Map.
If the BOC wishes to include residential uses in the "Employment Center" place type, we propose the following modifications to the place type description edit:

Employment Center - These centers are targeted for future job-generating uses in settings that meet today's workplace expectations. The mix of uses includes industrial, office, and supporting retail, restaurant, service, recreation, **and lodging, and other uses. Residential uses may include attached units (townhomes) and multifamily units (e.g., stacked flats, lofts, and upper floor units), provided residential development is incorporated into the Employment Center on parcel(s) that meet specific criteria (e.g., proximity and access to US-1) and such development becomes a supporting use, as defined in the UDO.**

Section Three: Matters to be Addressed During UDO Development

- A. Address the protection of National Register historic sites.
The UDO Audit included recommendations related to "Historic Preservation and Infill." See page 70, Audit Report. We currently are preparing building design standards for staff review and in recent months, have been in discussion with the County Planning staff regarding County authority and historic protection/preservation options. Planning is also keeping us abreast of the interest of some in the community of designating Bynum on the National Register. We anticipate recommending some options to staff this fall as we complete drafts of Module 2 of the UDO, which includes development standards for the whole County. Depending on the nature of historic protections the County wishes ultimately to adopt, this may necessitate a project separate from the UDO.
- B. Limit any residential outbuilding to non-commercial use for lots of 2 acres and less.
*The UDO consultants will follow up with staff on this suggestion, in order to gain additional context and consider a recommendation as part of the UDO project. As noted above, it may be that Module 1 needs to be revisited to reflect the recommendations in the **Plan Moncure** small area plan, regardless.*
- C. Provide a stronger policy statement of developer responsibility for stormwater management and requirements for turnover, including developer fines for failure to remove "temporary" barriers in natural open space areas and conservation/recreation areas.
Chapters 10-13 of the UDO Audit Report related entirely to the County's environmental codes: watershed protection, stormwater, soil erosion and sedimentation, and flood damage prevention. The UDO consultant team has been

working closely with staff over the last couple months on each of these issues, as they relate directly to county-wide development policy and standards. As to stormwater specifically, we have been evaluating available policy options for enforcing stormwater regulations, including authorized performance guarantee standards, alongside Planning and Legal staff. Drafts related to these topics are being prepared and reviewed this fall and will be part of "Module 2" of the UDO to be presented in early 2024.

- D. Regarding joint use of school facilities for recreation, encourage developers to design amenities and/or deed land to Chatham County consistent with multi-use purposes, including the need for school security and public access.
See note below.
- E. Require developers to include adequate recreational amenities, regardless of project size or type. Identify long-term maintenance responsibility and provide specific guidelines for maintaining easements and conservation areas.
Comments D and E can be addressed both within the context of the UDO and also as a matter of intergovernmental coordination. For example, Module 1 of the UDO, presented in March, included three proposed "conditional zoning" districts: Compact Residential, Compact Non-Residential, and Compact Mixed Use. The UDO team will assess options for addressing joint use of schools during these "negotiated" development process. It may be that other approval processes could address multi-use issues and recreational amenities as well. See Chapters 18 and Appendix A, Audit Report.
- F. To the extent the County already has existing municipal services, like public water, require developers to tie in.
The UDO consultants have discussed this subject, along with the related matter of wastewater treatment, with Planning and Legal staff and will make recommendations related to water services as part of the draft UDO. This, of course, will be a county-wide issue, as much as it is a Moncure issue.
- G. Adopt an explicit policy concerning short-term rentals to distinguish this activity from owner-occupied B&Bs that currently exist on larger properties.
Current County codes and the state statutes touch on this subject by defining and regulating the location of "bed and breakfast homes" and "bed and breakfast inns" through zoning. The UDO consultants recently held a virtual session with staff to review options related to "short-term rentals," generally speaking, regarding the letting of "whole homes" and less so individual rooms, for example. Those discussions are on-going and will be finalized this fall as we complete Module 2 and potentially revisit Module 1, which related to land use definitions and associated appropriate zoning categories.
- H. Provide specific examples of the kind of compatible "light industrial" uses within the Village Center.
*Draft Chapter 3 of the UDO, presented previously in Module 1, sets out categories of industrial uses, including light, heavy, and restricted uses. Draft Chapter 18, also presented in Module 1, includes detailed definitions of each. Module 1 also suggested zoning districts within which light industrial uses would be appropriately allowed. We will review the relationship of those zoning districts with the Plan Chatham and **Plan Moncure** Place Type policies related to Village Center specifically during the UDO process. The UDO process will address the compatibility of given uses through zoning, which, in essence, represents a*

refinement of the place type policies. For example, though the plan lists land uses that may be appropriate for a given place type, depending on context, does not mean every use would be appropriate in all areas mapped for that place type. Rather, through zoning, a final list of uses for a given parcel will be achieved case-by-case as zoning requests are considered.

Section Four: Additional Minor Revisions

In addition, the Team proposes revisions to the document to address specific details, such as refinements to graphics, formatting changes, and elimination of errors. Specifically, the Team will:

- Add figure numbers.
- Edit, as needed, to address any spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.
- Page 21: Adjust language to past tense and update the participation numbers. (For example, 57 attendees signed in at the third Community Open House.)
- Page 29: Remove the bullet from the first of four bullets.
- Page 29: Revise the callout box to simply describe the measures.
- Page 31: Revise the map to reorder the place types, change “Residential Neighborhood” to “Neighborhood Residential”, and edit labels as needed to be accurate.
- Pages 40, 42, and 44: Replace the images with the final set, add numbers to the plan view illustrations, and add supporting precedent imagery.
- Pages 41, 43, and 45: Insert the final perspective illustrations (see pp. 7-8).
- Page 77: In the second to last paragraph, add the following:
In addition, community stakeholders identified the following themes as the ones they would most like to see Chatham County address as part of its implementation work:
 - **Theme 2:** Protect rural character and rural lifestyle
 - **Theme 3:** Protect natural resources
 - **Theme 7:** Maintain affordability
 - **Theme 6:** Add important community-serving infrastructure
 - **Theme 11:** Protect historic resources

Stakeholders also identified the following projects as priorities for action:

TOP TEN SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
Project 6.1 – Continue Working to Partner with Internet Service Providers to Provide Affordable Broadband Service, within Resources and Authority Available
Project 8.1 – Work with Property Owners and/or Retailers and Restaurants to Consider Locating Stores in Moncure Area

TOP TEN SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
Project 2.2 – Update Unified Development Ordinance to Implement Plan Moncure Zoning Strategy to Protect Rural Character and Lifestyle
Project 5.1 – Build Parkers Ridge Park
Project 12.1 – Continue Working with CCCC on Job Skills Development Partnership to Help Train Local Residents
Project 9.1 – Evaluate Zoning Designations in Historic Villages such as Historic Moncure as Part of UDO to Help Facilitate Appropriate Infill
Project 6.2 – Collaborate with Partners to Identify Wastewater Service Needs and Feasibility
Project 10.2 – Continue to Facilitate Communication Between Residents and NCDOT Regarding Transportation Concerns
Project 5.2 – Work to Develop New Walking, Hiking, and Biking Trails
Project 7.1 – Work with Non-Profit Organizations to Continue Providing Home Repair and Weatherization Assistance to Residents in Need



