

*Appendix D. Spring 2024 Public Input Summary and Staff Responses*

# Western Big Branch Area Plan: Spring 2024 Public Input Summary and Staff Responses

The document includes a summary of the public input received during the Summer 2024 public engagement period as well as Town of Apex staff responses regarding:

- Draft Additional Plan Recommendations
- Draft Vision & Goals
- Additional Comments, separate from the materials provided for public input
- Friendship and New Hill Community Land Use Map & Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District proposal from members of the community

## Draft Additional Plan Recommendations

The Draft Additional Plan Recommendations and the associated comments received are listed below.

### *Future Land Use*

- Encourage development of a small-scale downtown near the intersection of Humie Olive Road and Old US 1.
  - Public Comment: Architecture of The Summit does not align with the Humie Olive Concept Development. Question of what controls will be put in place to ensure the small-scale downtown feel.
    - *Staff Response: Article 9 of the Unified Development Ordinance does contain architectural standards for all non-residential development. In addition to that, Planning staff typically requests additional architectural conditions at the time of rezoning to help ensure new development is compatible with the character of surrounding development. This includes conditions related to building placement on the property, height, size, and materials. Ideas for potential conditions include the following:*
      - *Building Hierarchy: Buildings should have a scale, mass, relationship to the street, and style similar to others in the area.*
      - *Setbacks: A maximum building setback could be used so that the relationship of the building to the street edge emphasizes the pedestrian not the automobile. Pedestrian spaces such as sidewalk dining or shaded seating are encouraged. Required parking and open space are encouraged to be to the rear or sides of a building.*
      - *Building Tenant Size: Buildings shall not have a single tenant which exceeds [xxxxx] square feet.*
      - *Massing and Proportion: Buildings shall have vertical proportions with each section taller than it is wide. Architectural features can be used to divide and create vertical orientation on building facades.*
      - *Building Height and Roof Type: Simple parapet roof edges with varying coping and cornice shall be used. The rooflines shall vary from building to building as well as within buildings with wide street frontage.*
      - *Façade: The building façade shall have an identifiable base, body, and cap with horizontal elements separating these components. The body of the building shall constitute a minimum of [xx]% of the total building height. Buildings should not have a false front appearance. Corner*

*buildings shall have two facades which maintain a relationship to each other although they do not need to be identical.*

- *Façade at Street Level: Require human scaled entries that include but are not limited to recessed entries, sheltering elements, and adjacent storefront windows.*
- *Windows: Windows shall be vertically oriented. A minimum of [xx]% of the street level facade area shall be transparent with at least [xx]% provided on the upper floors. Expanses of vertical windows which give the overall appearance of horizontal massing shall be avoided.*
- Encourage development of grocery/convenience offerings near the intersection of New Hill Holleman Road and US 1.
  - Public Comment: Grocery store is proposed as part of the New Hill Plaza, but the project's high-density housing does not align with small-scale community.
    - *Staff Response: The New Hill Plaza is proposed along a major transportation corridor, New Hill Holleman Road at the US 1 interchange. A portion of this development is proposed as High Density Residential to support the other uses in the development. Staff determined that it would be premature to show this area as High Density Residential on the Land Use Map due to the undetermined transportation improvements as well as the public comments against the addition of High Density Residential in this area. Should the rezoning move forward, Town Council would consider public comment during a public hearing and determine whether or not to approve changes to the zoning that would automatically update the 2045 Land Use Map.*

#### *Transportation*

- Study and potentially invest in turn lanes and a traffic signal at the intersection of Friendship Road and Old US 1.
  - Public Comment: Traffic signal and turn lanes needed at intersection of Friendship Road and Old US 1.
    - *Staff Response: The traffic study was conducted over multiple days and indicated that a traffic signal is warranted, but it is currently not funded. NCDOT has agreed to allow a traffic signal provided it also includes the Holland Road intersection to maintain full-movement at both intersections. The FY25 budget includes funding toward a developer agreement with Beazer Homes for the residential phase of The Summit PUD to construct the left turn lanes on Old US 1 and Friendship Road. Pending approval of that agreement and based on the developer's anticipated schedule, construction is expected to begin on the turn lanes in late 2024 and continue into 2025. The schedule for installation of a traffic signal depends on approval of a budget amendment and/or NCDOT funding, but at the earliest it would be installed in late 2025-early 2026.*
  - Public Comment: Concerned the traffic study included a school holiday.
    - *Staff Response: It was studied over multiple days and data showed it warranted a traffic signal. NCDOT has since concurred. Turn lanes were already proposed by that time based on previous traffic impact analyses.*
- Conduct a feasibility study for a potential grade separation at either NC 540 or S Salem Street to improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to Pleasant Park.

- Public Comment: Town should not open Phase 3 of the park given the unsafe conditions.
  - *Staff Response: The original traffic study only considered 2 phases (Phase 1 park build out without ball fields, Phase 2- addition of ball fields). Phase 1 transportation improvements committed by the Town of Apex have been constructed. Phase 2 includes off-site transportation improvements at the intersection of Old US 1 and Friendship Road (westbound and northbound left turn lanes). Funding for these improvements has been committed by Town Council. A traffic impact study addresses elements related to traffic operations. Traffic safety would be addressed by a follow-up traffic safety study.*
- Public Comment: Prepare an updated traffic study for Pleasant Park.
  - *Staff Response: The Town of Apex is currently meeting all of the transportation commitments that came out of the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) study that was conducted in 2018. An update to the TIA is not recommended as all transportation commitments are being met. Town staff would consider doing a further study after the construction of the ball fields. As part of the original study, traffic services staff had raised concerns about the single access to the park via Pleasant Plains Road across the CSX railroad tracks and recommended that long term planning and prioritization of access to the park from the south via grade separation over US 1 be considered in the future.*
- Public Comment: Provide additional roadway improvements to prevent near-miss incidents.
  - *Staff Response: Apex annually updates the high crash/high injury network inventory based on crash data and uses that information to identify potential improvements. Community members can also request review of specific traffic issues they identify using the request portal [Report a Concern](#). Proposed changes to state-maintained roadways require NCDOT review and approval.*
- Coordinate with NCDOT on its annual resurfacing contract for opportunities to stripe bicycle lanes and/or provide bicycle signage within the study area.
  - Public Comment: Raised centerline reflectors and reflective paint on road shoulders at the time of repaving would assist nighttime driving as drivers face oncoming headlights.
    - *Staff Response: NCDOT standards include retroreflective thermoplastic paint. Reflectors are typically reserved for US Highways and Interstate routes. Requests for maintenance on state-maintained roadways or additional safety measures can be directed to the request portal [NCDOT: Contact Us](#).*
  - Public Comment: Reduce posted speed limit along Old US 1 from 55 mph to 45 mph.
    - *Staff Response: NCDOT determines the speed limit along Old US 1. A recent change was made to reduce Old US 1 to 45 mph from Apex Barbecue Road to Humie Olive Road. Requests for speed studies can be directed to the request portal [NCDOT: Contact Us](#).*
  - Public Comment: In 2023, NCDOT determined that Friendship Road is ineligible for bike lanes. Additional cycling should not be encouraged until road improvements are made for both cyclist and motorist safety.
    - *Staff Response:*
      - *It is correct that Friendship Road is currently not wide enough for striped bicycle lanes. Roadway improvements are primarily constructed through private development. Without development along Friendship Road, it is*

*unlikely the roadway will be widened to accommodate a bicycle lane. North Carolina law allows cyclists to use a full travel lane.*

- Coordinate with regional partners on transportation requirements for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians associated with new development in the vicinity of the study area.
  - Public Comment: Include a community member in the discussions regarding Richardson Rd.
    - *Staff Response:*
      - *The community will be provided opportunities for input if any public project to design or construct Richardson Road moves forward.*
      - *There is not currently a funded project to design or construct an extension of Richardson Road and the Richardson Road extension is not included in the Town of Apex 5-Year Capital Improvement Program nor the State's 10-year Transportation Improvement Program.*
      - *Information about Town of Apex and NCDOT Transportation Projects is available online at: <https://www.apexnc.org/371/Transportation-Projects>*
      - *Information about development projects is available online at: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/41bf89a7c97d43a2934b0e823c8bfa45>*
  - Public Comment: The Richardson Road extension is a major highway up to 130 feet wide with 20,000 daily vehicles. This is much wider than existing roadways in the community and may generate traffic volumes in line with NC 540.
    - *Staff Response:*
      - *The typical section for a 4-lane median-divided thoroughfare in Apex includes 110' of right-of-way encompassing 4 – 11' travel lanes, 2 – 6' bicycle lanes, a 23' median, sidewalks, and a grass strip between the roadway and sidewalks.*
      - *The 2050 Triangle Regional Model (TRM) forecasts Richardson Road between Old US 1 and US 1 to receive total daily volume of approximately 10,000 vehicles without a connection of Richardson Road north of Old US 1. The Friendship Road Hot Spot Interchange Study (Hot Spot Study), led by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), included additional model analysis with the extension of Richardson Road to Humie Olive Road and widening of Richardson Road from Humie Olive Road to Olive Chapel Road. The Hot Spot Study confirmed the need for Richardson Road to be a four-lane median divided roadway. Model projections anticipate 2050 daily volumes of: 21,100 north of Old US 1 Highway, 21,000 between Old US 1 Highway and US 1, 16,900 south of US 1, and 17,200 north of Friendship Road. These volumes warrant a 4-lane, median-divided roadway, but are not comparable to projections for NC 540 which range from 62,800 to 83,300.*
  - Public Comment: Update scope for traffic studies to include traffic that is generated when a development's school is capped or when a park fee-in-lieu occurs.
    - *Staff Response:*
      - *Traffic Impact Analyses (TIAs) recommend potential mitigation of added traffic within a reasonable distance of the development, not solving*

*existing traffic issues or long-term background traffic growth further away from the site. The amount of traffic potential is part of that consideration when it comes to the limits of the study area. If a school is several miles away from a proposed development that's typically already outside the study area. A school 5-10 miles away would be too far outside the study area than we can legally require a developer to analyze.*

- *TIAs do not split up and assign trips based on trip purpose, such as home to school, home to community park, grocery store to school, etc. It's a set percentage of all trip purposes combined and then assigned to/from primary routes in the vicinity of the site. The best we can do with any confidence in a mixed-use development is assign internal percentages based on accepted methodology for "trip capture" and then assign remaining traffic for separate use types externally. We still cannot say with any confidence that a certain percentage of trips from any particular land use type are headed to a specific school nor the exact route they would take.*
- Public Comment: Conduct traffic studies.
  - *Staff Response: Apex scopes Traffic Impact Analyses in cooperation with NCDOT when new developments are proposed that potentially exceed thresholds in the Unified Development Ordinance Section 13.19. Community members can also request review of specific traffic issues they identify using the request portal [Report a Concern](#).*
- Further explore a potential transit connection between downtown Apex and Pleasant Park.
  - Public Comment: Bus stops must be internal to the park and not on Pleasant Plains Rd.
    - *Staff Response: Given the roadway network in the area, if a bus were to serve the park, it would be planned with stops internal to the park.*
  - Public Comment: Town staff need to supervise minors who come to the park without an adult.
    - *Staff Response: There are no dedicated Town staff to supervise minors. There are dedicated Town staff to maintain park facilities and oversee park programs.*
  - Public Comment: Support the GoApex bus, but a bus stop is needed closer to the study area.
    - *Staff Response: Given the public's preference for primarily Rural Density Residential and Rural Transition Residential, the potential for expanded transit options in this area is limited. Per public comment, Town staff are looking into the potential for public transit to serve Pleasant Park in the future. Note: the study area is within the GoWake Access Rural Transportation Area and Elderly and Disabled Systems Transit Area. More information about GoWake Access is available online at: <https://www.wake.gov/departments-government/health-human-services/programs-assistance/gowake-access-transportation>.*
- Suggested Recommendations
  - Public Comment: Friendship Road is 6.5-ton weight limited. Work with NCDOT to increase enforcement.
    - *Staff Response: There is a 6.5-ton axle load limit (weight per axle) due to the bridge. Enforcement requests should be directed to the Highway Patrol and/or notify [NCDOT: Contact Us](#).*

- Public Comment: Old US 1 has blind spots due to rolling hills. Work with incoming development to reduce hills.
  - *Staff Response: Town staff and NCDOT review all new requests for driveway permits as part of the plan review process and comment on sight distance issues that need to be resolved before issuing a permit. That may result in relocating a proposed access, limited turning movements, and/or modifying the grade of the existing roadway.*
- Public Comment: Old US 1 has concrete buckling under the pavement. Work with NCDOT to have concrete removed from problem areas.
  - *Staff Response: NCDOT determines the requirements for resurfacing and/or reconstruction of existing pavement along Old US 1. Staff also review and comment on development plans that propose road improvements, but final pavement design is ultimately up to NCDOT. Requests for specific maintenance can be directed to the request portal [NCDOT: Contact Us](#).*
- Public Comment: Restrict left turn hours at Friendship Road/Old US 1 intersection.
  - *Staff Response: NCDOT determines the operations and access management along that corridor. At this time there are plans to add turn lanes and a traffic signal is being considered for funding now that it is warranted. Requests for specific turn restrictions can be directed to the request portal [NCDOT: Contact Us](#). It is unlikely NCDOT would prohibit left turns due to concerns about non-compliance in the absence of a median to create a physical barrier.*
- Public Comment: Explore roundabouts.
  - *Staff Response: The Transportation Plan identifies locations for future roundabouts. These locations are carefully considered given the substantial cost and right-of-way needed to construct a roundabout. Potential locations were identified through coordination with NCDOT and guidance on operational requirements for roundabouts. As part of the Town's adopted Vision Zero Action Plan, roundabouts will be considered, as appropriate to reduce conflicts between vehicles at intersections. No future roundabouts are recommended in the study area based on a review of existing and future intersection considerations including, traffic volumes, multi-modal usage, railroad proximity, potential right-of-way impacts, and number of travel lanes.*
- Public Comment: Coordinate with other agencies to construct road infrastructure.
  - *Staff Response:*
    - *The Town of Apex participates in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) through coordination with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in their development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The MTP guides project requests to the STIP. Public projects to improve existing NCDOT roads that are outside of the corporate limits of the Town of Apex would need to be requested for prioritization by NCDOT Division 5 or Wake County.*
    - *There is one project in the STIP with committed funding in the study area, referred to as HE-0010. This project includes interchange improvements at US 1/New Hill Holleman Road and improvements at the intersections of New Hill Holleman Road at Friendship Road and Friendship Road at Holly Springs New Hill Road. Design of this project is underway. Right-of-way acquisition is anticipated in 2025-2026. Construction is anticipated in 2026-2028.*

- *There is one unfunded future project in the STIP, referred to as U-6101, would convert roadway facilities to managed freeways and include ramp metering. This project includes I-40, I-87, I-440, and US 1 / US 64.*
  - *Roadway improvements are also constructed through private development. The Town works with Holly Springs and NCDOT on required improvements associated with traffic impacts of new development.*
- **Public Comment: Traffic signal needed at Kelly Road/Old US 1**
  - *Staff Response: NCDOT typically recommends over 1200' between full movement intersections on major thoroughfares and the NC 540 ramps are only 550' from Kelly Road. It is unlikely NCDOT would permit another traffic signal that close to the existing one. However, requests for a traffic signal can be directed to the request portal [NCDOT: Contact Us](#). The intersection of Kelly Road may eventually be restricted to right-in/right-out or a left turn crossover (with no lefts from Kelly Road to Old US 1) due to its close proximity to the NC 540 ramps. Access restrictions were recommended as part of the West Village PUD plan once additional connectivity is provided to reroute those left turns via new local streets west of Kelly Road, shown on the Town of Apex [Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan Map](#).*
- **Public Comment: Construct bike lanes along Old US 1 from Friendship Road to NC 55.**
  - **Staff Response:**
    - *The Town of Apex [Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan Map](#) includes bicycle lanes along S Salem Street/Old US 1 from the southern intersection with Apex Peakway to the Chatham County line. The plan also includes shared lane markings along S Salem Street from NC 55 to the southern intersection with Apex Peakway.*
    - *As development occurs along S Salem Street and Old US 1, developers are required to stripe and pave the bicycle lane space. NCDOT allows bicycle lane pavement markings and signage to be added after a continuous bicycle lane has been constructed between destinations.*
    - *The Town of Apex Draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 5-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes the South Salem Street Bicycle Connection. This project includes shared lane markings along S Salem Street from Apex Peakway to Hunter Street and bicycle lanes along S Salem Street from Pleasant Park to Apex Peakway. Funding for design is included in the FY 2024-2025 annual budget. Funding for right-of-way acquisition is anticipated in FY 2025-2026. Funding for construction is anticipated in FY 2026-2027. The Town anticipates an appropriation of federal funds to help with construction. The schedule is subject to change as the CIP and budget are updated annually.*
- **Public Comment: Remove timers from lights at NC 540/Old US 1.**
  - *Staff Response: NCDOT operates the traffic signals at NC 540. During construction of Depot 499 there is a period of time where the detector loops were disabled and the signals were temporarily operating on max times. The traffic signals will be restored to normal operation using detector loops to adjust signal phase times based on traffic demand once construction is complete. Requests for service and timing changes of traffic signals can be directed to the request portal [NCDOT: Contact Us](#).*

## Quality of Life

- Encourage economic development along the Richardson Road corridor at the future Friendship Road/US 1 interchange.
  - Public Comment: This is an Apex goal, not a community goal.
    - *Staff Response: Public survey responses on the Draft Study Area Vision and Goals included comments to leverage opportunities for higher density and commercial development at major intersections, focus on economic development opportunities, and provide more commercial development in New Hill. Town staff also recommend economic development opportunities along critical transportation corridors, which Richardson Road has been identified as. There were also public comments against economic development in this area. This may be an area where not all stakeholders share the same perspective.*
  - Public Comment: The community understands development will occur. It should reflect Historic Friendship and New Hill.
    - *Staff Response: A summary of development restriction mechanisms and considerations with staff recommendations is available in Appendix K.*
- Utilize the Town of Apex Affordable Housing Incentive Zoning Policy to encourage mixed housing options in the study area.
  - Public Comment: Mixed housing should be banned as it was not part of Historic Friendship or New Hill. Small-scaled Habitat for Humanity styled homes with small yards or replicas of New Hill travel cottages are a better fit.
    - *Staff Response: The Town of Apex Affordable Housing Plan has set a vision for its future that states: Apex welcomes people of diverse backgrounds, and supports opportunities for affordable, safe, sanitary, and quality housing that meets the needs of people of all incomes, ages, and abilities. A mix of housing options is needed to achieve this vision. The Unified Development Ordinance allows cluster subdivisions and tiny homes to be provided in an area designated with a lower density through rezoning to a Planned Unit Development. It would be up to Town Council to approve that style of development.*
- Suggested Recommendations
  - Public Comment: Provide more housing.
    - *Staff Response: In the Plan, there are some opportunities for High Density Residential and Medium Density Residential. The majority of the residential areas are proposed as Rural Density Residential and Rural Transition Residential based on the feedback provided on the three plan amendment scenarios.*
  - Public Comment: Provide parks.
    - *Staff Response: The Town of Apex [Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Cultural Resources, Greenways, & Open Space](#) (Parks & Rec Maser Plan) includes a map of [Future Parkland and Indoor Facility Search Areas](#). The Parks & Rec Master Plan includes an Indoor Facility Search Area in the study area. The Town has future plans to establish a park, called Olive Farm Park, along the south side of Humie Olive Road between Richardson Road and New Hill Olive Chapel Road. [Advance Apex: The 2045 Plan](#) includes plans for a linear park in the area between Old US 1 and the CSX railroad in the vicinity of future Richardson Road.*
  - Public Comment: Keep areas for people with low incomes to live.
    - *Staff Response: The Additional Plan Recommendation to Utilize the Town of Apex Housing Incentive Zoning Policy to encourage mixed housing options in the study area is intended to address this comment.*

- Public Comment: Do not build a landfill near New Hill.
  - *Staff Response: Staff agrees that a landfill should not be proposed in this area.*
- Public Comment: Increase buffers in UDO to protect rural properties.
  - *Staff Response: Planning staff are in the early stages of developing a standard list of zoning conditions for properties designated as Rural Density Residential, Rural Transition Residential, and Low Density Residential on the 2045 Land Use Map that would be provided to developers to consider proffering. This may include increased buffers.*

#### Environment

- Review best practices and develop a policy to encourage the preservation of forested areas.
  - Public Comment: NC Forest Service and Wake County Soil & Water should be included in the development of the plan.
    - *Staff Response: Planning staff shared the Draft Plan with the NC Forest Service and Wake County Soil & Water Conservation District and provide them with an opportunity for review.*
  - Public Comment: Town should look to establish a community forest in the study area, similar to the Cary Tree Archive.
    - *Staff Response: The Town does not currently have plans to establish a community forest in the study area.*
  - Public Comment: Town should look to establish a permanent farmers market and community farm, similar to Good Hope Farm in Cary.
    - *Staff Response: The Downtown Apex Farmers Market is operated privately. The Parks & Rec Master Plan includes a recommendation to leverage opportunities such as farmers markets to advocate access to healthy and local food. The Town does not have plans to establish a farmer's market in the study area.*
- Continue to designate properties within the study area as either part of the Primary or Secondary Watershed Protection Areas after being voluntarily annexed into the Town of Apex.
  - Public Comment: Property owners would like to know the future classification before annexation.
    - *Staff Response: All properties within the Jordan Lake Basin will be considered Primary Watershed and all properties within the Cape Fear Basin will be Secondary. For context, in the [Watershed Protection Map](#), everything north and west of the brown line is considered Jordan Lake and everything to the south and east is considered Cape Fear.*

#### History

- Incorporate New Hill Historic District gateway signs into the Town-wide Wayfinding Signage Program.
  - Public Comment: Should include both New Hill and Friendship historic gateways.
    - *Staff Response: This draft recommendation has been removed from the plan. The recommendation is for the Friendship and New Hill Communities to participate in the Town of Apex Historical Marker Program on properties located within the corporate limits. Additional gateway signage would need to be county or community-led.*
- Encourage residents of the Friendship and New Hill communities to participate in the Town of Apex Historical Marker Program.
  - Public Comment: Agreed. Please provide the process.

- *Staff Response: The Historical Marker Program application is available on the Town of Apex website at: <https://www.apexnc.org/215/Applications-Schedules>.*
- Add a subtitle to the plan document: Western Big Branch Area Plan – Encompassing the Friendship and New Hill Communities.
  - Public Comment: The Western Big Branch Area Plan name should be abandoned. Let property owners nominate the name.
    - *Staff Response: This name is proposed to be kept the same for clarity's sake, but a subtitle has been added to acknowledge that the plan area includes portions of the Friendship and New Hill Communities. The proposed plan name is "Western Big Branch Area Plan: Encompassing portions of the Friendship and New Hill Communities".*

## Draft Vision & Goals

### *Draft Study Area Vision*

The Western Big Branch Area Plan envisions a future where the rural residential character of the study area is valued and actively protected, the unique history of the New Hill and Friendship communities is acknowledged and celebrated, new development is responsive to the needs of surrounding residents, and multimodal travel is safe and context sensitive.

### *Draft Study Area Vision Comments*

- Public Comment: Most of the community generally agrees.
  - *Staff Response: Noted.*
- Public Comment: The community is more than just rural, it includes a variety of farm types. These tracts provide economic value through environmental protection.
  - *Staff Response: The Plan includes a revision to the first part of the Study Area Vision to state, "The Western Big Branch Area Plan envisions a future where the rural residential and agricultural character of the study area is valued and actively protected..."*
- Public Comment: Study Area Vision and Town Ordinances need to be expanded to address the potential nuisance that new development creates in the study area.
  - *Staff Response: Town staff are coordinating with Holly Springs and NCDOT to address transportation improvements that can be made based on warrants and available funding.*

### *Draft Study Area Goals Comments*

The draft study area goals and the associated comments are listed below.

1. Preserve rural residential land, agriculture, and open space
2. Maintain and enhance the tree canopy
3. Protect water resources
  - Public Comment: Rural nature and tree canopy cannot be preserved when there is more than one house per acre.
    - *Staff Response: The Plan includes recommendations to designate a large portion of the study area as Rural Density Residential (1 unit per 5 acres) and Rural Transition Residential (1 unit per acre). There are strategies for maintaining tree canopies with higher density designations, such as cluster subdivisions.*
4. Honor the history of the Friendship and New Hill communities
  - Public Comment: Agreed. Thank you.

- *Staff Response: Noted.*
5. Encourage development of a small-scale downtown near the intersection of Humie Olive Road and Old US 1
  6. Encourage development of grocery/convenience offerings near the intersection of New Hill Holleman Road and US 1
    - Public Comment: It is understood that commercial development may occur along Old US 1 and New Hill Holleman Road.
      - *Staff Response: Noted.*
    - Public Comment: Mixed-use and high density residential is not cohesive to adjoining rural properties and fails to actively protect the rural nature of the study area.
      - *Staff Response: In the Plan, mixed-use and High Density Residential is limited to the Old US 1/Friendship Road/Humie Olive Road area.*
  7. **(Added after 2023 online survey)** Encourage economic development along the Richardson Road corridor south of Old US 1 and at the future Richardson Road/US 1 interchange
    - Public Comment: This is not a community goal. This would further divide the community and destroy portions of Bosco Road and potentially Friendship Rd.
      - *Staff Response: Public survey responses on the Draft Study Area Vision and Goals included comments to leverage opportunities for higher density and commercial development at major intersections, focus on economic development opportunities, and provide more commercial development in New Hill. There may not be a shared perspective among all stakeholders for this goal. Town staff do recommend opportunities for economic development along critical transportation corridors.*
    - Public Comment: Remove this goal.
      - *Staff Response: See above response.*
  8. Improve the safety of area roadways for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians
    - Public Comment: Agreed.
      - *Staff Response: Noted.*
  9. Mitigate the impact of surrounding development on existing roads
    - Public Comment: Replace the word “mitigate” with “eliminate”.
      - *Staff response: Existing and upcoming development in Apex and the surrounding areas will need to utilize existing roadways. In a growing area like our region, impacts of development cannot be completely eliminated.*
    - Public Comment: When development is approved with park fee-in-lieu and schools are capped, there is more traffic. Account for this in traffic studies.
      - *Staff Response: See response to this comment under the Additional Plan Recommendations section.*
    - Public Comment: Connector roads are not supported as these roads do not protect the rural character and does not increase the quality of life.
      - *Staff Response: In the Plan, there are limited collector streets in the study area.*
  10. Provide trails, greenways, and trailheads
    - Public Comment: Community is split:

- Opposed if facilities come with townhomes.
- Support if facilities come with commercial development.
  - *Staff Response: In the Plan, the only new trails include side path along the south side of Old US 1 from Richardson Road to New Hill Holleman Road. The future land use along the eastern portion of this side path is Park, Public or Private. The future land use along the western portion of this side path is Commercial Services and Office Employment.*

## Additional Comments

The following comments were provided about the planning process as well as about topics separate from the Western Big Branch Area Plan.

- Public Comment: Concerned about the lack of transparency associated with the Little Beaver Creek Conservation Easement.
  - *Staff Response: The planned alignment of the future Richardson Road corridor is consistent with the adopted Transportation Plan and was shown crossing this area prior to the establishment of the conservation easement. The Town has followed all steps to analyze alternatives and propose mitigation as required by the State. While this process was vetted through public hearings and work sessions, we do understand the request for additional transparency and notification. If further design work is completed for Richardson Road, this will occur through a transparent public process.*
- Public Comment: Concerned about the three scenarios versus having a dialogue about what the community wants.
  - *Staff Response: The three scenarios were presented to start the dialogue about the future land use and transportation plans in this area. Staff needed to devise an approach for engagement that was available to all who wanted to participate.*
- Public Comment: Perception that the Town is looking to expand the same kind of development as is found in Apex versus development unique to the study area.
  - *Staff Response: Under state law, the Town has limitations to regulate the design of single and two-family houses. In the Plan, density levels are generally in alignment with the community input, Rural Density Residential and Rural Transition Residential. The Plan includes a recommendation to encourage agricultural business and agritourism development.*
- Public Comment: Friendship and New Hill residents lack representation.
  - *Staff Response: The majority of the Western Big Branch Area Plan study area is located within Wake County rather than Apex Corporate Limits or Apex ETJ. Planning Board currently includes a Wake County resident who lives in the Friendship area as well as an ETJ member appointed by Wake County. Board of Adjustment includes an ETJ member appointed by Wake County. The specific requests for representation have been shared with Town Council for further consideration.*
- Public Comment: Planning Department steered the options.
  - *Staff Response: Planning Department staff developed the three plan amendment scenarios based on the public input provided at the three open houses in August 2023. The scenarios reflect trade-offs between development intensities and the opportunity for transportation improvements as transportation improvements are primarily provided through private development. These were developed as a starting point for public comments and further input.*

- Public Comment: Concerned that the input provided at the August 2023 open houses on what attendees would like to see more of and less of in the study area was used as approvals.
  - *Staff Response: The input provided at the August 2023 open houses was used to inform the three plan amendment scenarios presented at the March 2024 public meetings.*
- Public Comment: Against Apex’s use of eminent domain and development (Richardson Road, Hunter Street Sidewalk, Pleasant Park).
  - *Staff Response: The Town did not use eminent domain for Pleasant Park. The Town has not sought eminent domain authority for Richardson Road or Hunter Street sidewalk.*
- Public Comment: The community plans to propose a Historical Farm Overlay District to reflect the historical significance of farming and to support and encourage urban farms, mini farms, horse farms, and larger farms in the study area.
  - *Staff Response: Staff have considered the overlay district request. A summary of development restriction mechanisms and considerations with staff recommendations is available in Appendix K. The Plan includes a recommendation for the Town to encourage agricultural businesses and agritourism. A review of allowable agricultural business and agritourism uses in the study area is available in Appendix J.*

### Friendship and New Hill Community Land Use Map & Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District

118 property owners have signed a petition to propose a neighborhood conservation overlay district called the Historical Farm Overlay District. The full proposal is included as an attachment to the staff report. The proposal notes that purpose of this zoning overlay district is to preserve and enhance the general quality and appearance of established neighborhoods by regulating built environmental characteristics such as lot size and frontage, building setback, and building height. This district is intended to reduce conflicts between new construction and existing development and encourages compatible infill development.

Key elements of the overlay district proposal are listed below.

- Residential development:
  - Provisions regarding building height, fencing, buffers, stormwater, tree preservation, and seller disclosure
    - *Staff Response: Staff have considered the overlay district request. A summary of development restriction mechanisms and considerations with staff recommendations is available in Appendix K. This appendix includes staff recommendations to address the requested residential development provisions.*
- Citizen Advisory Committee:
  - Review and provide non-binding comments on pre-applications for development
  - Participate in neighborhood meetings
  - Participate in Town Council Work Sessions, Technical Review Committee meetings, and public hearings
    - *Staff Response: This request has been shared with Town Council for consideration. Planning Department staff recommend that community members form an informal committee of community members in this area and participate in Planning Board and Town Council public forum and public hearings. Planning Department staff have shared the community’s request for additional representation on Town of Apex advisory boards from the Friendship/New Hill area with the Town Clerk’s office.*

In addition to the overlay district proposal, the community members provided additional feedback regarding the Land Use Map and Transportation Plan.

#### *Land Use Map Comments*

- Residential development:
  - Public Comment: No more than one home per acre
    - *Staff Response: In the Plan, a large portion of the study area is designated as Rural Transition Residential (1 unit per acre) or Rural Density Residential (1 unit per 5 acres).*
- Commercial development:
  - Public Comment: Target commercial development along Old US 1, New Hill Holleman Road, and future Richardson Road
    - *Staff Response: In the Plan, commercial development is targeted along these roadways.*
  - Public Comment: Do not allow mixed-use commercial with residential development
    - *Staff Response: In the Plan, a mix of residential and either commercial or office uses are only included in the vicinity of Old US 1/Friendship Road/Humie Olive Road and along a portion of the east side of New Hill Holleman Road.*
  - Public Comment: Encourage agritourism
    - *Staff Response: The Plan includes a recommendation for the Town to encourage agricultural business and agritourism. A review of agricultural businesses and agritourism uses allowable in the study area is available in Appendix J.*

#### *Transportation Plan Comments*

- Public Comment: Focus on improvements to perimeter roads (Old US 1, NC 540, New Hill Holleman Road)
  - *Staff Response: In the Plan, Old US 1 and New Hill Holleman Road remain 4-lane median-divided thoroughfares. The proposal does not include any changes to NC 540. See response below regarding construction of collector streets. See response on page 4 of this appendix regarding the need for the Richardson Road extension.*
- Public Comment: Minimize interconnectivity
  - *Staff Response: Interconnectivity through collector streets is recommended in parts of the study area where development levels would generate new trips. Collector streets are intended to improve access to destinations and provide alternative routes. In the Plan, there are limited collector streets due to the generally low land use intensities, but these are recommended where connectivity is considered critical.*
- Shift future Richardson Road east
  - *Staff Response: In the Plan, Richardson Road is proposed to be aligned in accordance the preferred roadway alignment included in The Friendship Road Hot Spot Interchange Study (Hot Spot Study), led by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO). While this alignment does have stream impacts, it is shifted away from Bosco Road in accordance with public comments.*