

Honorable Commissioners:

The undersigned homeowners' advocacy organizations are working together to positively impact managed growth in Forsyth County. These organizations, which represent nearly 10,000 homeowner members from all 5 districts and over 300 neighborhoods, present to you a short list of six Board of Commissioners actions to immediately resolve homeowners' concerns regarding the appropriate pace, type, and density of growth within Forsyth County. We believe these actions will ensure a proper balance between environmental stewardship and a continuation of the quality of life across the County that has brought this phenomenal growth:

1. Adjust the current residential rezoning review rule as follows: a maximum of one (1) RES 3 or higher rezoning review per district per calendar month; no limitation on RES 1 and RES 2 (low density) rezonings; we also suggest an official or an effective moratorium on rezonings of RES 4 and above (excluding true Senior Living) until adequate roads, schools and sewer are in place to support the development - this could be applied specifically to southern Districts which are experiencing the most growth (ie. #2, #3, and #5).
2. Require a strong, defensible justification for any variance requested. We contend that variances predicated on developer and/or landowner profit maximization DO NOT constitute a "hardship" and thus fail in meeting the UDC standard for approval. Hardships must be proven, explained with specificity, consistently applied and defensible upon examination. We would also support language in the UDC that states that a builder/developer cannot bring, before the BOC, multiple projects in a 6 month time period seeking the same and/or similar type of variance. Ultimately, we would prefer a moratorium on all variances until a county-appointed committee, including homeowner representation, is formed who would review and evaluate all variance requests.
3. Adoption of the *Smart Growth Forsyth* proposal to change the formula for determining density and the way that open space is defined. We believe that these changes would help restore balance to all zonings, in all categories, by respecting the intent of open space as space enjoyable by all, and by articulating the true density of respective development as a function of the number of homes built on "buildable" ground. As an alternative to this density and open space proposal, we advocate a simple, across-the-board, mandatory 40% green space requirement that, like the tree ordinance, cannot have a variance applied against it. This would be applicable for all development, in all categories.
4. Demand that developers invest in the community from which they are extracting profits. To this end, we propose the following:
 - Apply Impact Fees by unit (rather than by square footage) to directly associate the fees with burden being placed on the community.
 - Expand fees specific to include Road Improvements and Expansion, which are currently excluded from Impact Fee collection in the County Rules. A review of impact fees reveals that many surrounding municipalities have chosen to collect impact fees vs. requiring improvements. We suggest road impact fees comparable to those levied in Canton or Alpharetta.
 - Increase the overall Impact Fees by at least a 25% premium over surrounding Counties/Cities aligning developer investment with the premium environment that Forsyth County offers developers.

- Evaluate Permit Fees vs. other jurisdictions with a goal to set said fees at a premium level to allow for the collection of additional monies that will be used by the county for discretionary purposes such as road improvements, parks or emergency services.

- Institute a tiered impact fee schedule applied by zones to address the increasing land cost to build out infrastructure in the south (-central, -west, and -east) areas of Forsyth County. The purpose is to ensure adequate infrastructure be put in place to accommodate managed growth in the south, while encouraging growth in other parts of the County. For example, Zone 1 would include areas with little to no growth (standard impact fees); Zone 2 would include areas that are on the verge of development, but have not yet experienced high growth (higher impact fees); Zone 3 impact fees would be for areas experiencing moderate growth, and so on. These fees would be based upon, among other things, the price per acre of land, and the cost of providing services in each zone.

- Task the Forsyth County Financial Staff to conduct a study of residential and commercial "Development Permit" costs and scope. Present to both BOC and homeowners advocacy organizations listed below.

5. Creation of a Forsyth County Big Creek Watershed development plan to actively monitor and manage the impervious surface percentage within the County and ensure that it does not exceed the State-mandated 25%. This must include maintenance of a current, ongoing estimation by the County for the existing and approved but not yet built impervious surface, and, for every new development and zoning, rezoning or other administrative land activity, inclusion of this estimation by planning in the written planning staff review of that activities impervious surface and the resultant impact to the larger percentage. This plan must also include measures to relieve landowners who may be impacted by the future inability to develop due to these protections.
6. Revisit the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan Future Development Map, adopted March 15, 2012 and acquire proper and valid community input. The current map did not receive the required community input, and is in fact, flawed as a result. This process should consider the appropriate amount of commercial vs. residential development to maximize the amount of receipts to support the infrastructure needed in our community and to provide a means to avoid millage increase by supplying a better balance between residential and commercial tax revenue. We have provided you all a copy of a petition signed by over 5,100 residents requesting you do this.

As a Board, we ask you to support the homeowners and their vision for what Forsyth County should be. It is not your mission to assist developers in yielding the highest gains on their proposed projects but rather to uphold the intent of the UDC, to manage growth so as to not overburden the County infrastructure nor significantly detract from stakeholders' quality of life, and to protect and conserve the beauty and integrity of the County's natural features and resources.

Sincerely,

Fix Forsyth Traffic
Greg Dolezal & Matthew Broms

Forsyth Citizens for Responsible Growth
Tony De Maria & Lee Cohn

Forsyth HOA & Homeowners
Tom Page & Kristen Stevens

Post Road Committee for Proper Development
Jim Compton

Smart Growth Forsyth County, Inc.
Claudia Castro, Managing Director
Robert Slaughter, Deputy Director