

# Blount County Policies Plan

(Adopted 1999)

# Why is the Policies Plan Important?

- It was developed from the bottom up with citizen input.
- It is the most current, approved, general plan.
- It is action oriented and provides a guide for implementation activities.
- Much of it was integrated into the Hunter Interests Growth Strategy.
- It is scheduled for revision, and can continue as a strong guide in the future.

# Five Guiding Policies

- The rural, small town and natural character of the county should be preserved
- Land use and development should be managed and regulated in order to preserve the quality of our growing county

# Five Guiding Policies

- The guiding policy in any government actions in relation to the use and development of land should be to limit regulations to specific public health, safety and welfare objectives balanced with responsible freedom in the use of land

# Five Guiding Policies

- County roads should be improved and maintained to a level consistent with present development and expected future development
- Growth and development should be appropriately matched with provision of adequate infrastructure such as utilities, roads and schools

# Implementation Agenda

- Proof is in the pudding – action speaks louder than words
- 21 item implementation agenda
- Eight years of implementation on a 20 year time horizon
- Many accomplishments – much still to be done
- Integrating Growth Strategy - issues & challenges

***1. Review and revise the county  
Subdivision Regulations.***

# Accomplishments – Sub Regs

- Adequate infrastructure – roads, (schools)
- Underground utilities
- Septic standards – lot size and bedrooms
- Higher level preliminary plat review
- Higher level review of storm water/erosion control plans
- More field inspection – Planning, Highway Department, Storm Water Department
- New subdivision regulations adopted 2006

# Issues – Subdivision Regulations

- Adequate infrastructure – roads, schools & more
- Smart Growth design - cluster
- Open space - preservation
- Road design standards (HII ?)
- One lot subdivisions (HII ?)
- Impact analysis
- Maryville/Alcoa UGB – split jurisdiction
- Document organization/readability

***2. Formulate a zoning plan,  
including regulations and zoning  
map.***

# Accomplishments – Zoning

- Adopted zoning regulations – land use map
- Adopted flood plain regs - flood insurance
- Building Commissioner hired – BZA appointed
- Non-conforming use - amend to match state law
- Rounds of amendments RAC
- Sign amendments – scenic highway standards
- Adult entertainment regulations
- Public notice greater than state requirements
- Considering commercial design regulations

# Issues – Zoning

- Rural commercial use – RAC/strip commercial
- Smart Growth design – village clusters
- Smart Growth design – mixed use
- Open space, scenic areas, rural character
- Rural lot size
- Maryville/Alcoa UGB - split regulatory jurisdiction
- Tuckaleechee Cove and heritage/tourism
- Signs and communication towers
- Adjustments needed to match 1101 Growth Plan
- Comprehensive plan – physical structure

***3. Provide education to public officials on constitutional provisions and court decisions on land use issues.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Education

- Concepts of police power and law included in trainings
- Some object to limitations on regulations ,and others to exercise of police power
- Public health and safety issues clearer than public welfare issues

*4. Review professional literature on design guidelines for preserving rural character, preserving farmland, preserving scenic views, and other matters pertinent to further refinement of implementation strategies.*

***5. Formulate voluntary design guidelines for preservation of open space, preservation of natural features, minimization of visual impact, and other design elements not appropriate for formal regulation.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Preservation Literature Review Voluntary Design Guidelines

- Planning library expanded in this subject
- Staff review of literature applied informally in discussions with developers
- No mandatory compliance – persuasive and voluntary only
- Low priority in Policies Plan – high priority in Growth Strategy w/ County regulation

***6. Study and consider options for building codes.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Building Codes

- Building Codes adopted
- Building official/staff hired
- Now being implemented

***7. Continue involvement in the  
Tuckaleechee Cove Advisory Board.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Tuckaleechee Cove Advisory Board

- Adopted vision statement
- TCAB Reluctant to make specific recommendations
- Sidetracked by incorporation effort
- Has not met recently – little budget left
- Unique character of Cove/gateway a focus of Growth Strategy
- Need to revitalize

***8. Encourage establishment of private farm and open space conservation groups. The Planning Commission supports private, voluntary efforts at farm and open space conservation.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Support of Preservation Groups

- No accomplishments
- Few groups to support
- Only voluntary efforts supported
- Low priority in Policies Plan – high priority in Growth Strategy w/ County funding

*9. Formulate a strategic plan for preservation of farmland and open space and pursue grants for purchase of development rights. The Planning Commission supports pursuit of grants to preserve farmland and open space, so long as such grants do not require local government funding. Planning staff can assist in this activity.*

# Accomplishments/Issues – Preservation – Plan/Grants

- No accomplishments
- No structure in County Government to focus on grants
- Limitation – no County funds
- Few groups to support
- Low priority in Policies Plan – high priority in Growth Strategy w/ County funding support and regulation

***10. Conduct study of pollution sources of the Little River and formulate a pollution prevention program.***

# Accomplishments – Water Quality

- Partnered with TVA – IPSI study - \$33,000 County share
- Partnered with TVA – Tennessee Growth Readiness pilot community – education
- Citizen input – 22 sites
- Water Quality Plan approved 2003
- Further planning in Little River Watershed
- Part of support basis for recent grant for Little River Watershed implementation activities
- Implementation of Storm Water Phase 2 – hiring of Storm Water Program Coordinator

# Issues – Water Quality

- Total Maximum Daily Load
- Other watersheds in County (besides Little River)
- Aquifers (Growth Strategy)

***11. Study the feasibility of a county-wide sewer system and formulate a plan.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Sewer System

- No direct accomplishments
- Alternative systems – loosening the bounds
- Historically not a high priority
- Need coordination with cities
- “County-wide” perspective may not hold given Growth Strategy to concentrate development in and around cities

***12. Review existing septic field standards and consider more stringent standards and greater enforcement effort.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Septic Field Standards

- Amended subdivision regulations three times to increase standards for lot approvals
- New grant for Little River Watershed addresses low income septic repair
- Septic is still the long term service for most development outside city limits

***13. Study and formulate a county wide plan for drainage.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Drainage Plan

- County and cities obtain approval of storm water phase 2 plans – Lamar Dunn engineering assists
- Storm water program coordinator hired
- Erosion control regulations adopted – permit required
- Planning Dept./Commission coordinates review/enforcement of water quality measures
- More regulations planned/required
- Fee schedule still not determined

***14. Formulate a county wide parks and recreation plan.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Parks and Recreation Plan

- Parks and recreation plan delivered 2005
- Active, cooperative parks and rec program
- Need to integrate open space plan  
(Growth Strategy)

***15. Increase support for groups concerned with litter control.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Litter

- Active Keep Blount Beautiful program
- Litter control crew through Sheriff's Dept.
- Environmental Court pursued
- Litter problem still on people's minds

***16. Review procedures to accommodate small private household dumping in the land fill.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Household Solid Waste

- Solid Waste Authority undertook study of operations
- No special consideration given to small household dumping in land fill

***17. Provide more opportunity for hazardous waste collection and disposal.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Hazardous Waste

- County conducts two household hazardous waste collection days per year
- No continuous opportunity for household hazardous waste disposal

***18. Consider regulations for collection and storage of garbage, litter, refuse, and rubbish.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – “Dirty Lots”

- “Dirty lot” regulations adopted
- Only applies to property not owner occupied
- High frequency of complaints – neighbor versus neighbor
- Takes a large amount of Building Commissioner’s time to administer

***19. Conduct a study of county roads, formulate a roads plan and a capital budget for roads.***

# Accomplishments/Issues – Roads Plan and Budget

- Road needs study completed 2000 – updated 2005 - large deficit in needed improvements
- Capital needs estimated but no overall county capital improvements program/budget
- No money for major improvements – no match
- Need to integrate circumferential road recommendations from Growth Strategy
- Need to update major road plan map

*20. Study alternative modes of transportation for the county.*

# Accomplishments/Issues – Transportation Alternatives

- Local bicycle planning group active in regional plan context
- Regional assessment identified bus transit as most feasible alternative
- Pattern and density of development in most of county not conducive to transit oriented development

*21. Formulate a growth plan under Public Chapter 1101 that is consistent with the general county plan.*

# Accomplishments/Issues – 1101 Growth Plan

- Plan finally done – litigation over
- Provides guidance to planning decisions
- Weak on expected or desired growth pattern – mainly status quo
- A wedge between cities and county – turf war
- Continuing inconsistencies w/ zoning
- Growth Strategy addresses 1101 issues lightly

Now let's look at some ...

# Big Questions

- Should the County take a larger role in preserving rural open space? How much regulation? How much financial support? How much is enough open space?
- Should the County compel desirable development designs? Use police power to insure aesthetics?
- How much is too much rural commercial?

# Big Questions

- Should the County take a direct role in sewer infrastructure extension? What cost? Use to manage growth?
- Should the County fund major road improvements? What revenues? R.O.W. condemnation?
- When do we start capital budgeting?

# Big Questions

- How much should the cities do to step up to the plate?
- Can we come to some rational agreement on 1101 growth plan?
- How much should the private sector/ citizen groups/ citizens do? Is it always government responsibility?

Questions?

Comments