

Benefit 4: promote more livable and sustainable development in greenfield areas

Beyond the core city are the suburban and greenfield areas of High Point. Key policy direction in the Land Use Plan and the Community Growth Vision Statement is that development in this area should be both livable and sustainable. There are a number of regulatory tools that the city might consider in a code update to accomplish these goals. They include:

1. **Parking regulations** that reduce the amount of land consumed, address surface lot location, and add flexibility to parking requirements.

2. **Landscaping** standards that increase the use of native plants and greater species diversity.

3. **Open space set-aside** standards that protect natural resources and provide useable open space.

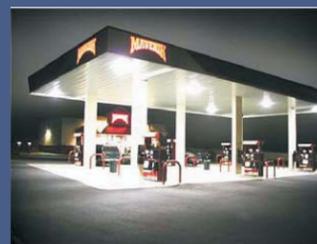
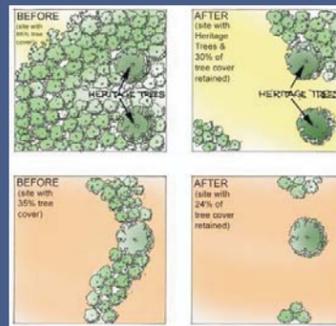
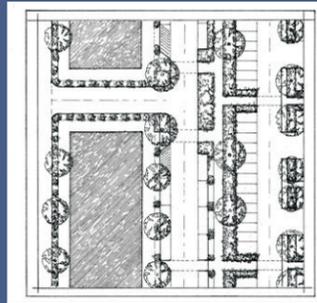
4. **"Mass grading"** limitations where grading would significantly alter the landscape or destroy open space features.

5. **Community form** standards that improve connections, address streetscape landscaping, and promote a well-designed public realm.

6. **Commercial design** provisions that improve aesthetics and promote human-scale and pedestrian orientation.

7. Basic design standards for **single-family and multi-family residential development** that address monotony, garage-dominated landscapes, and inaccessible open space areas.

8. **Exterior lighting** provisions that control glare, light overspill, and lighting heights.



Benefit 5: create additional flexibility and incentives

The city's development ordinance would benefit from additional incentives and added flexibility to accommodate new forms of development, encourage redevelopment, allow development on constrained sites, and provide alternative approaches to address common development constraints. These types of provisions could be added in a code update. They include:

1. Development standards that recognize the distinct differences in development context in the core city versus the suburban/greenfield portions of the city.

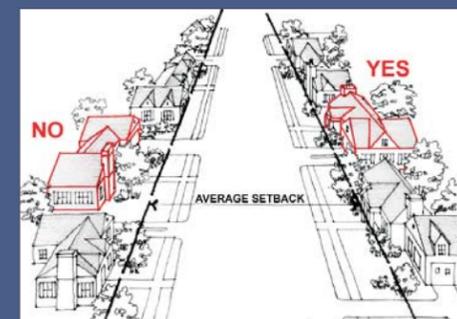
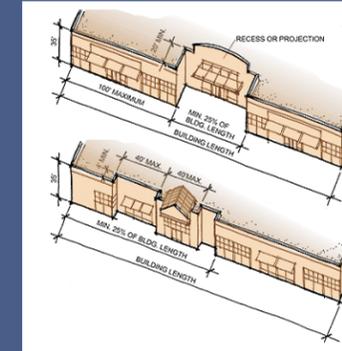
2. Use of a two-tiered administrative adjustment process to allow minor adjustments to development standards, and more significant adjustments where the city's planning goals are achieved and compensating public benefits are provided.

3. Allowance of alternative forms of compliance when development proposals meet or exceed minimum development ordinance standards, subject to specific criteria.

4. Inclusion of incentives for preferred development, like:

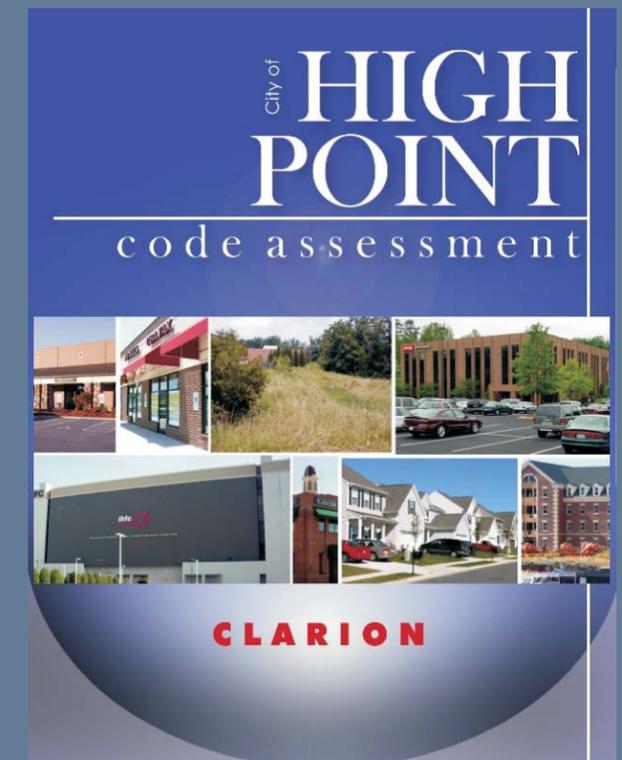
- Density bonuses;
- Dimensional flexibility; and
- Reduced parking or landscaping.

5. Use of contextual dimensional standards in the core city and other strategic areas to stimulate redevelopment by minimizing nonconformities.



executive summary of code assessment

High Point, North Carolina



September 2009

For more information contact:
Heidi H. Galanti, AICP
Planning Administrator
Planning and Development Dept.
heidi.galanti@highpointnc.gov
(336) 883-3328
www.highpointnc.gov/plan/

overview

The City of High Point has adopted several plans that establish the city's policy goals related to zoning and land development. They are:

- The Land Use Plan (2000);
- The Core City Plan (2007); and
- The Community Growth Vision Statement (2007).

These plans provide guidance on how the core city should be redeveloped, as well as what development should be like outside the core city. As the city contemplates additional implementation efforts, Clarion Associates was retained to assist staff in evaluating the current development ordinance. First, Clarion was asked to evaluate whether, and to what extent the city's current development ordinance is in need of an update, given the policy direction in the city's plans and current "best practices" in land development regulation. In addition, Clarion was asked to identify the benefits of a code update.

The code assessment project is focused on answering two key questions:

1. Does the city's current development ordinance need to be updated?

2. What benefits, (if any) would result from updating the development ordinance?

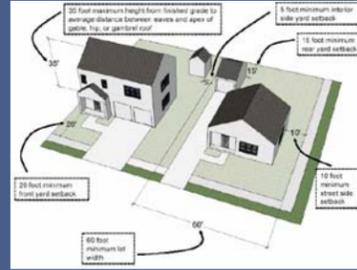
The Code Assessment concludes that there appears to be a number of reasons the city's current development ordinance is in need of update. There also appears to be a number of benefits if such an update is undertaken. They are:

1. A more user-friendly code;
2. Implementation of the Core City Plan;
3. Protection and revitalization of the city's neighborhoods and gateways;
4. More livable and sustainable development in the suburban/greenfield areas; and
5. The creation of additional flexibility and incentives to encourage development.

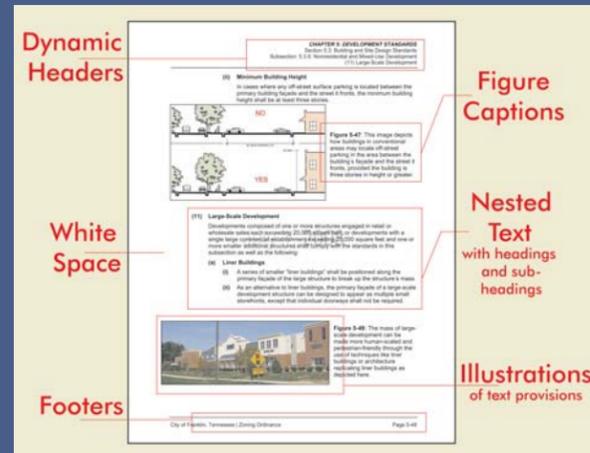
Each of these benefits, as well as concrete measures for how they can be accomplished through a code update, are summarized in the balance of this Executive Summary.

Benefit 1: make the code more user-friendly

There is a general consensus among code users that the city's development ordinance is not user-friendly. If updated, it could be made more user-friendly in numerous ways. They include:



1. Reorganizing the code in a more logical way, by:
 - Consolidating all procedures into one chapter;
 - Consolidating all zoning district regulations into one chapter; and
 - Reorganizing the development standards into one chapter.
2. Using more graphics and illustrations to explain zoning concepts and make the text easier to follow (see sample code page below).



3. Clarifying code language so that all users better understand the "rules of the game."
4. Simplifying the way uses are classified.
5. Adding new procedures to make the development review process more predictable and efficient, including:
 - A new conditional rezoning procedure;
 - A new development agreement process;
 - A new planned development procedure; and
 - A new zoning compliance permit.
6. Adding a set of common review procedures so that there is one process for all the different types of development applications.

Benefit 2: implement the core city plan

The Core City Plan was adopted in February 2007. It concludes that the current development ordinance is too "suburban" for the core city because it does not allow all desired types of development, and in some instances, impedes redevelopment. The Plan recommends the city re-tool the development ordinance to address the modern-day needs of the core city. These recommendations could be accomplished in a code update. They are:



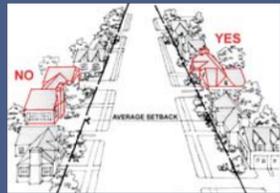
1. Allowing higher densities and more use-mixing in the core city.
2. Encouraging traditional downtown uses (ground floor retail, upper-story residential, etc.) around the central business district.
3. Establishing a "Mixed-Use Center District" to accommodate mixed-use centers.
4. Establishing a new zoning district for the city's major institutions – High Point University, High Point Regional Hospital, and Guilford Technical Community College – to allow their growth while ensuring they are compatible with surrounding development.
5. Placing increased focus on development form by adding new design standards and flexible dimensional requirements while allowing a broader array of uses.
6. Improving the pedestrian environment through new community form standards.
7. Modifying the development standards, like parking and landscaping, to recognize the core city's urban character.



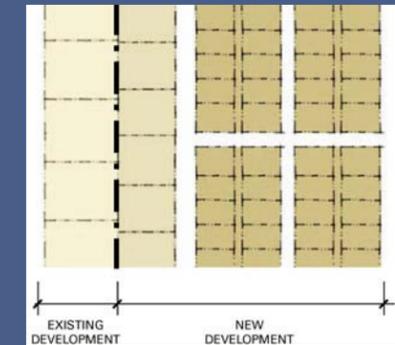
Benefit 3: protect and revitalize neighborhoods and gateways

1. Protect and Revitalize Neighborhoods

The Core City Plan and Growth Vision Statement emphasize the need to revitalize and protect the physical character of High Point's neighborhoods. While new development may be beneficial, it should not be out of character with that of existing neighborhoods. Many regulatory tools could be added in a code update to protect and revitalize the neighborhoods. They include:



1. Transitional standards to maintain compatibility between dissimilar land uses.
2. Infill standards to ensure new development is compatible with its surroundings.
3. Neighborhood conservation overlay districts to help maintain established character/context.
4. Contextual compatibility provisions that allow flexible dimensional standards to support neighborhood character.



2. Gateways

The city's gateway corridors (like NC 68) are likely to be subject to increasing development pressures in the coming years. There is general consensus that well-designed and aesthetically-pleasing gateways are important for establishing the city's unique sense of place and promoting increased development. To assist in establishing this sense of place along the gateway corridors in a code update, the city could develop new scenic corridor overlay districts for the gateway corridors to maintain distinctive entrances to distinguish High Point from surrounding jurisdictions and improve the development aesthetic.