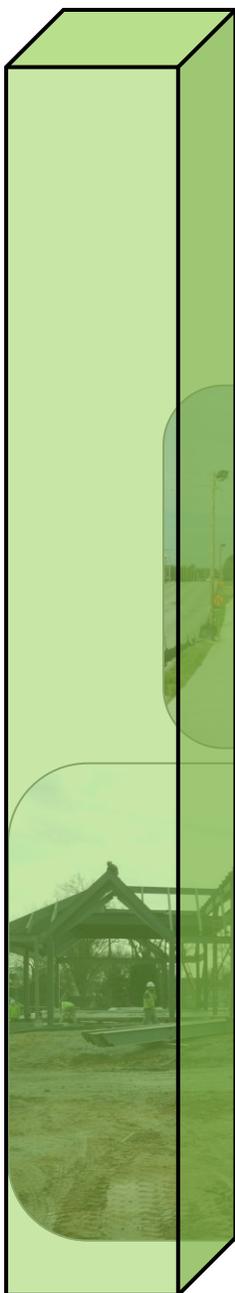




# Planning and Development Department

# 2011 Annual Report



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## **2011 Annual Report**

### **Executive Summary**

The slowdown in development over the past several years showed early signs of recovering in 2011. For the second year in a row there was a slight increase in many of the categories used to measure development activity, although not nearly to the level seen before “the Great Recession.” The total number of rezoning cases, along with the amount of both residential and non-residential acreage rezoned, increased compared to the previous two years. The total number of Technical Review Committee (TRC) plans reviewed and approved also increased last year. Although the amount of non-residential square footage approved by the TRC went down due to a decrease in institutional and industrial development, there was a small increase in the amount of office and commercial development. There was also a dramatic improvement in the number of residential lots/units approved – from 27 in 2010 to 202 in 2011.

The total number of building permits and construction plans, which typically lag behind the trend seen in rezoning and TRC approvals, did not show the same kinds of increases. However, the total number of permits for new construction decreased less than in each of the previous five years. There was even a small increase in the number of new residential building permits, which is the first increase since 2005. Furthermore, while the number of new commercial building permits decreased, the value of those permits increased by over 50%. This, along with a 21% increase in the value of new residential construction, contributed to an increase of approximately 43% in the value of new building permits issued. Similarly, the number of building construction plans dropped by almost 10% in 2011, but the number of residential plans increased for the first time in five years.

Local Code Enforcement activities continued to be a priority over the past year. Although the total number of violations decreased in 2011, the number of public nuisance and minimum housing code violations still exceeded 2007 and 2008 levels. In addition, the Inspection Services Division continued to conduct home energy audits and assisted the Customer Service Department with utility connections last year.

The Department also continued to assist with implementation of the *Core City Plan*. This included an analysis of existing land use patterns that resulted in changes to the Land Use Plan designations for much of the Core City area. In addition, a tree inventory of the area identified over 4,400 trees and close to 250 potential planting spaces with the help of almost 40 volunteers using a \$12,000 grant from the state.

The Department also received two other grants to carry out projects. The State Office of Historic Preservation gave the City a \$15,000 grant to complete a National Register Historic District nomination for several historic neighborhoods near North Main Street. Most significantly, the City received a \$239,141 Community Challenge Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to rewrite the Development Ordinance over the next two and half years.

Completion of the Heart of the Triad plan, along with the expected impact of PTIA’s new runway led to adoption of the Northwest Area Plan in early 2011 to help guide development of the northwestern portion of High Point’s Planning Area. The potential for increased aircraft noise in the area also led to recommended adjustments in the City’s airport noise mitigation regulations.

Hopefully you will find the information in this report of interest, and if you have any questions please contact Lee Burnette at 883-3328, or visit our website at: [www.highpointnc.gov/plan](http://www.highpointnc.gov/plan).

## City of High Point Planning & Development Department

The Planning and Development Department produces an annual report every spring to highlight the activities of the Department over the previous calendar year. The following are notable projects in 2011 that helped contribute to the goal of making High Point more livable, safe and prosperous.

### Key Projects

#### Comprehensive Planning – Core City Plan

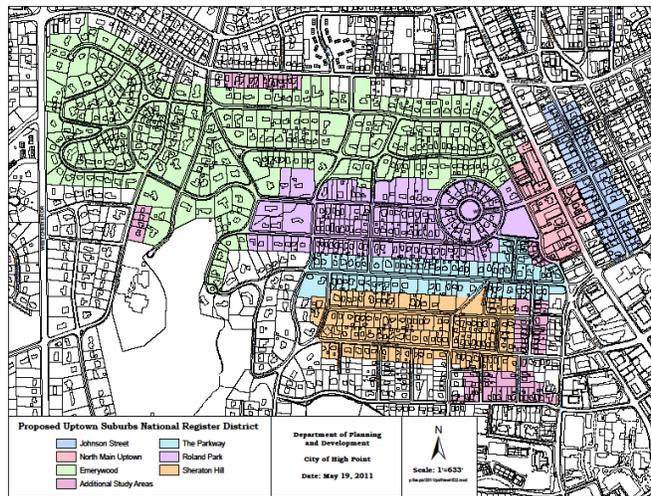
The *Core City Plan*, adopted by City Council in February 2007, is a guide for revitalization of the 11 square mile Core City area. Implementation of the plan will continue for many years to come. The Department worked on the following projects in 2011 to help implement the plan.

##### ➤ **Core City Neighborhood Land Use Plan Amendments**

Planning and Development staff surveyed and analyzed the existing land use patterns and current land use plan designations for eight Core City neighborhoods – East Central, Kendall Avenue, Macedonia, Oak Hill, Southside, Washington Street, Washington Terrace, and West End. Based on this analysis, and feedback from neighborhood groups, several amendments to the City's Land Use Plan were proposed in order to make the land use designations conform more closely to the existing land uses and to maintain and improve neighborhood stability by protecting these neighborhoods from unwanted intrusions. The recommended changes were adopted by City Council in early 2012.

##### ➤ **North Main Street Neighborhoods National Register Historic District**

A historic preservation consultant was selected last year to prepare a national register district nomination for the historic portion of North Main Street, and the Johnson Street, Emerywood, Roland Park, and Sheraton Hills neighborhoods. This project was funded in part by a \$15,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office; the City's fourth such grant in the last ten years. The consultant has completed survey field work and digital photography of approximately 640 structures and properties, which represent some of the city's best examples of architecture from the 1910's and 1920's era. The consultant is now in the process of conducting interviews and writing the narrative due for completion by mid-August.



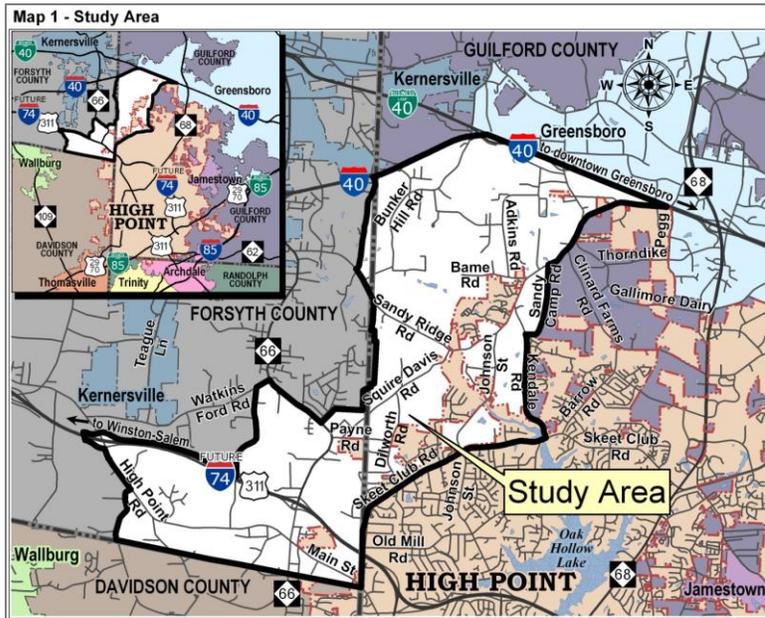
##### ➤ **Core City Tree Inventory**

The City was awarded a \$12,000 Urban and Community Forestry grant from the N.C. Division of Forest Resources in 2010-2011 to conduct an inventory of trees located on public property in the Core City area. Over 4,400 trees were identified last April and May with the help of almost 40 volunteers who were trained to collect information about tree species, size and condition. In addition, approximately 250 potential planting spaces were identified. John Sugg of Treefull Communities, LLC, the certified arborist who led the project, produced a report and analysis from the information gathered, along with a tree management plan that makes recommendations to ensure more consistent maintenance of trees in the future.

**Comprehensive Planning**

➤ **Northwest Area Plan**

A number of events, including the opening of the FedEx air cargo hub, adoption of the Heart of the Triad plan, the revised High Point/Kernersville Annexation Agreement, and extension of a major sewer outfall from High Point to Kernersville, will greatly affect the development potential of the northwest part of the City's planning area. As a result, the Northwest Area Plan was adopted in 2011. In addition to background information, it included recommendations about protection of the natural environment, achievement of high quality development through design guidelines, integration of transportation systems, continuation of economic development efforts, and identification of appropriate future land uses for this area. This required changes to the Land Use Plan designations for the area to make them consistent with the recommendations in the area plan.



➤ **Piedmont Triad Sustainable Communities Project**

The City of High Point is a partner with the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC), and other agencies, institutions and local governments in implementing a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant funded project to create a regional plan for the 12-county Piedmont Triad region. It is intended to build economic competitiveness in the region by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation. Staff from the Department attended regular meetings in 2011 to help get this long-term project kicked off and to start building momentum for future activities.

➤ **Planning Process Assessment**

This report will assess the need for a more comprehensive planning process and recommend how the City's various plans could be better coordinated. Particular attention will be given to the relationship between infrastructure plans and plans related to growth, development, and redevelopment. By integrating these plans, the City will be better able to address long-term growth issues and save money through greater efficiency of efforts. The assessment will be reviewed by City management and other departments in the spring of 2012 before being presented to the P&Z Commission and City Council later in the year.

➤ **Annexation Agreement Renewals**

In 2011, the Department continued efforts to renew the City's annexation boundary agreement with the City of Archdale, which expired in 2010. This work will continue into 2012.

## ***City of High Point Planning & Development Department***

### **Development Review**

#### ➤ ***Urban Placemaking to Develop and Transform the Economy of High Point – UPDATE High Point***

The Department submitted and received a \$239,141 grant from HUD in 2011 to rewrite the City's Development Ordinance over the next two and half years. The City will continue to work with Clarion Associates, who also completed an assessment of the ordinance in 2009. This assessment found that the ordinance is out of date and was written more for suburban development, which makes infill and revitalization efforts more difficult. The project will be guided by a citizen advisory committee, and public outreach efforts to underrepresented populations will involve the Center for New North Carolinian's (CNNC) and the NC A&T Center for Energy Research and Technology (CERT). There will also be a website where the public can comment on the process and view progress as work is completed.

#### ➤ ***Airport Overlay District Revisions***

Based on an Airport Noise Compatibility Study conducted in 2004 by the Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTIA), Department staff assessed the potential impact of aircraft noise on the area surrounding the airport. This led to recommended adjustments in the City's Airport Overlay District regulations, including the expansion of the zones in which notification to future homeowners about possible nighttime noise would be required. These recommendations were presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission in late 2011 and were slated for presentation to City Council in January 2012.

#### ➤ ***Development Plan Review Procedures***

Over the past several years, a group of Department staff has been meeting to review and revise the construction and site plan review procedures to create a more efficient and effective process. They identified proposed changes that will improve predictability, so that expectations are established upfront, and will make the process more responsive to customer needs. The new process is intended to promote greater transparency and be more understandable to customers by providing clear and reliable information and accurate, thorough and timely results. In 2011, progress included implementation of a new residential building permit application. Work on this initiative will continue into 2012.

#### ➤ ***Randleman Buffer Rules***

The Development Ordinance was amended last year to comply with new state watershed rules regarding stream buffer requirements for the Randleman Lake Watershed. The general intent of these rule changes is to allow administrative approval of certain activities within the buffers upon a finding by the TRC, rather than following the variance process that requires City Council or State approval. Existing development in a buffer is exempt and not affected by this amendment.



## 2011 Annual Report

### Building Code Administration

#### ➤ **Home Energy Audits**

In addition to their regular duties, Inspections Services staff performed 359 free home energy audits at the request of homeowners in 2011. After the approximately one hour audit is complete, a written report identifying ways to conserve energy and providing recommendations on how to correct any deficiencies is mailed to the homeowners. This is an example of how Planning and Development staff is working to address new issues of concern, especially in regard to energy conservation.

### Local Codes Enforcement

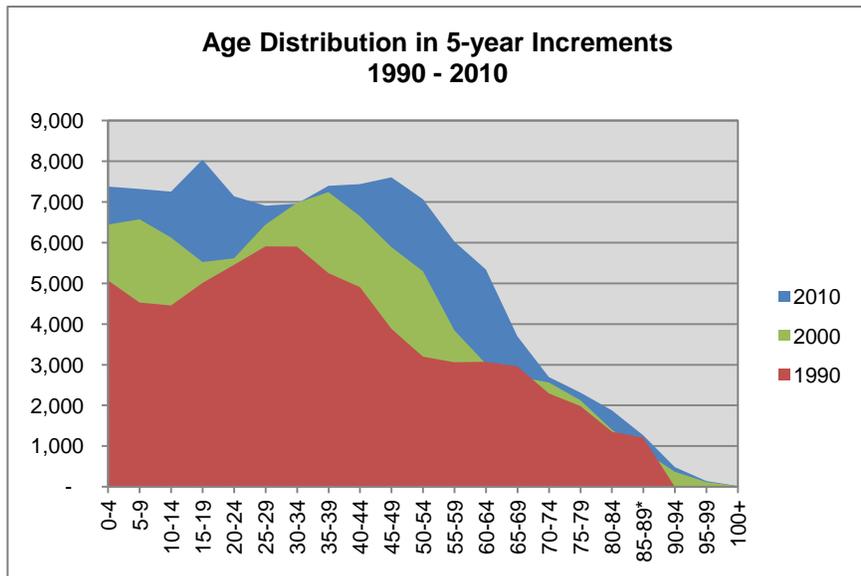
#### ➤ **Focus on Local Codes Enforcement**

Construction inspectors once again took a more active role in local codes enforcement activities in 2011. This allowed local codes enforcement inspectors to focus more time on high priority enforcement activities like public nuisances and minimum housing code violations, which have taken on increased significance over the past several years due to the deteriorating conditions in many neighborhoods as a result of the economic downturn.

### Information Management

#### ➤ **2010 Census Analysis**

Every ten years, the Department produces a report analyzing the results of the most recent decennial census. Figures from the 2010 Census, along with data from the American Community Survey (ACS) for the period 2006-2010, which replaced the “long form” used in previous censuses, were released in 2011. This information is being compiled and charts and graphs created to show trends and comparisons with previous censuses, which will be used in the demographic and socioeconomic profile released in 2012.



#### ➤ **Classified Streams GIS Updates**

This project updated the perennial and intermittent classifications in the Geographic Information System (GIS) for every stream in the city. It also established a standard procedure to edit stream coverage when changes in stream classification are received from the N.C. Division of Water Quality or State certified City staff. In the process, streams were realigned to more accurately reflect their true location according to the most recent aerial photography.

**City of High Point Planning & Development Department**

**High Point Growth**

**Annexations**

The City of High Point typically adds property to its incorporated boundaries through voluntary annexations, usually in exchange for access to City services such as water and sewer. As shown in Table 1, the number of annexations and acreage annexed dropped significantly from 2007 to 2010 primarily due to a slowdown in new residential development, which typically accounts for a significant portion of voluntary annexations. However, there was an increase in both the number of annexations and the amount of acreage annexed in 2011.

**Table 1: High Point Annexations and Incorporated Area**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annexations</b>	<b>Acreage Annexed</b>	<b>Total Incorporated Area</b>	<b>Annual Area Growth Rate</b>
2002	20	260.78	52.29 sq. miles	0.89%
2003	15	590.02	53.21 sq. miles	1.76%
2004	15	289.90	53.66 sq. miles	0.85%
2005	19	403.85	54.29 sq. miles	1.17%
2006	8	283.32	54.73 sq. miles	0.81%
2007	14	316.29	55.23 sq. miles	0.91%
2008	6	92.45	55.37 sq. miles	0.25%
2009	2	5.69	55.38 sq. miles	0.02%
2010	1	1.33	55.38 sq. miles	0.004%
2011	4	37.90	55.44 sq. miles	0.11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>2,281.53</b>	<b>55.44 sq. miles</b>	<b>0.68%*</b>

\* Average annual growth rate over the entire 10-year period

**Population**

The Department estimates the city's population as of April 1 each year. In 2011, the estimate was 105,843, which was a 1.41% increase over the population determined during the 2010 Census. Table 2 shows previous population figures and annual growth rates from the Department's annual population estimate and the last two censuses. Projections for 2015 and 2020 were done in 2005. New projections will be calculated in 2012 using 2010 census figures.

**Table 2: Annual Population Estimates and Projections**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Estimated/Projected Population</b>	<b>Increase From Previous Year</b>	<b>Annual Population Growth Rate</b>	<b>Change Since April 1, 2000</b>
2000	85,839*	N/A	N/A	N/A
2001	87,572	1,733	2.02%	1,733
2002	89,306	1,734	1.98%	3,467
2003	90,522	1,216	1.36%	4,683
2004	92,489	1,967	2.17%	6,650
2005	93,352	863	0.93%	7,513
2006	94,793	1,441	1.54%	8,954
2007	96,867	2,074	2.19%	11,028
2008	98,490	1,623	1.68%	12,651
2009	100,442	1,952	1.98%	14,603
2010	104,371*	3,299	3.91%	18,532
<b>2011</b>	<b>105,843</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>1.41%</b>	<b>20,004</b>
2015	114,207**	2,091***	1.98%***	28,368
2020	125,544**	2,189***	2.07%***	39,705

\* Based on decennial census

\*\* Projections calculated in 2005 by City

\*\*\* Average annual increase and average annual percent change since year noted in previous row

**Appointed Boards**

**Planning & Zoning Commission**

High Point's Planning & Zoning Commission is an advisory body made up of nine members appointed by the City Council. It reviews and makes recommendations on a variety of items, including requests to rezone property to change the allowable uses and development regulations, special use permits to approve a use that is permitted only after a specific review process, street abandonments to close a portion of public right-of-way, amendments to previously approved plans and permits, and text amendments to the Development Ordinance. The Planning & Zoning Commission also reviews and makes recommendations on the Land Use Plan and other small area plans produced by the Department, and makes final decisions on street renaming petitions.

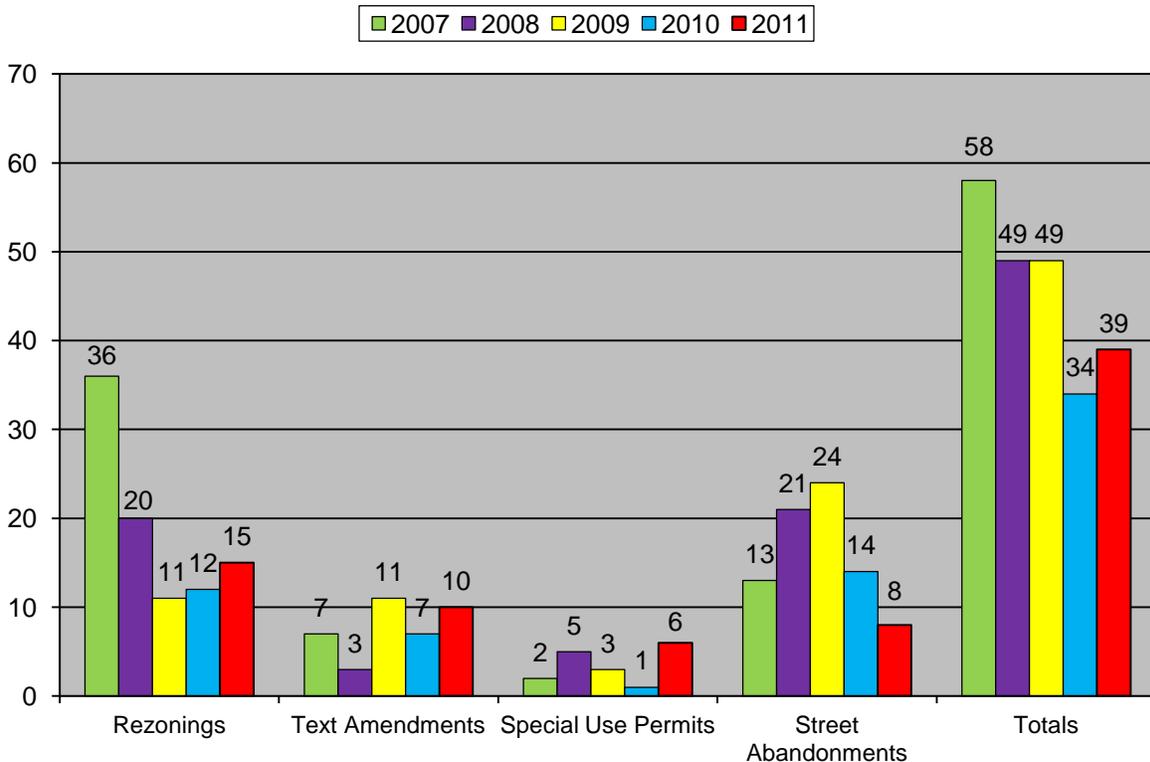
**Planning & Zoning Commission**

(as of Dec. 31, 2011)

- Mark Walsh, Chair
- Carson R. Lomax, Vice Chair
- Cynthia Y. Davis
- James Davis
- Keith McInnis
- John W. McKenzie
- Andrew Putnam
- Martha Shepherd
- Marie Stone

In 2011, the Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed a total of 39 cases, which was the first increase in four years. The number of rezoning cases continued to climb incrementally, but not nearly to the level seen before “the Great Recession.” There was also an increase in the number of text amendments and special use permits last year. The drop in street abandonment cases is due to the Department’s efforts in previous years to identify the most nonessential unopened street rights-of-way, resulting in a higher number of cases, along with an increase in last year’s other cases, which required a greater share of the staff’s time and resources. A breakdown of the types and total number of cases reviewed from 2007 to 2011 is shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1: Cases Reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Commission**



## City of High Point Planning & Development Department

Not every request the Commission reviews is approved. The ultimate decision on whether to approve or deny a request lies with the City Council, after considering the recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission. In 2011, the Commission recommended approval on 35 of the 39 requests they reviewed. This resulted in concurrence with staff's recommendation on 34 of 39, or 87.2%, of the cases, as shown in Table 3. Table 4 shows that City Council concurred with the Commission's recommendation on 33 of 39, or 84.6%, of the cases with no cases being withdrawn between the Commission and Council hearings. Charts 2 and 3 below show the breakdown of staff and Commission recommendations and the final decisions by City Council.

### City Council (as of Dec. 31, 2011)

Rebecca R. Smothers, Mayor  
 Latimer Alexander, At-Large Representative  
 Britt Moore, At-Large Representative  
 Bernita Sims, Ward 1 Representative  
 Foster Douglas, Ward 2 Representative  
 Michael D. Pugh, Ward 3 Representative  
 A.B. Henley, III, Ward 4 Representative  
 M. Christopher Whitley, Ward 5 Representative  
 Dr. James Corey, Ward 6 Representative

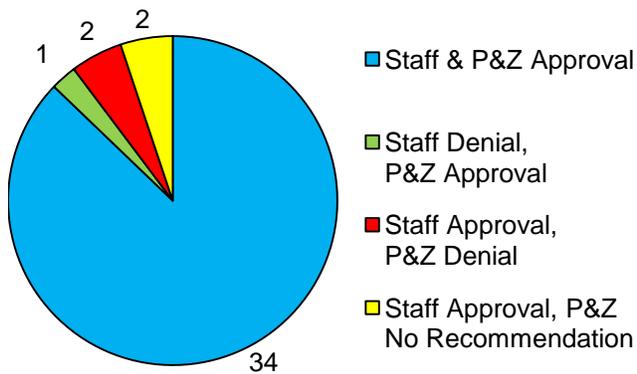
**Table 3: Staff and P&Z Concurrence**

Year	Staff and P&Z Commission Concurred	Rate of Concurrence
2007	54 of 58	93.1%
2008	47 of 49	95.9%
2009	48 of 49	98.0%
2010	33 of 34	97.1%
2011	34 of 39	87.2%

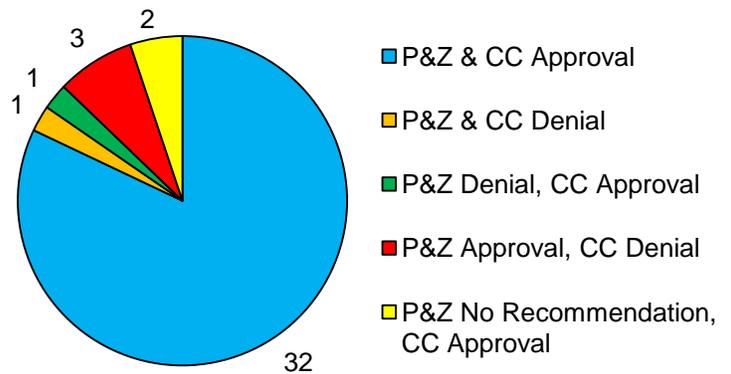
**Table 4: P&Z and City Council Concurrence**

Year	P&Z Commission and City Council Concurred	Rate of Concurrence
2007	50 of 53	94.3%
2008	46 of 48	95.8%
2009	44 of 49	89.8%
2010	31 of 33	93.9%
2011	33 of 39	84.6%

**Chart 2: 2011 Staff/P&Z Recommendations**



**Chart 3: 2011 P&Z/Council Decisions**



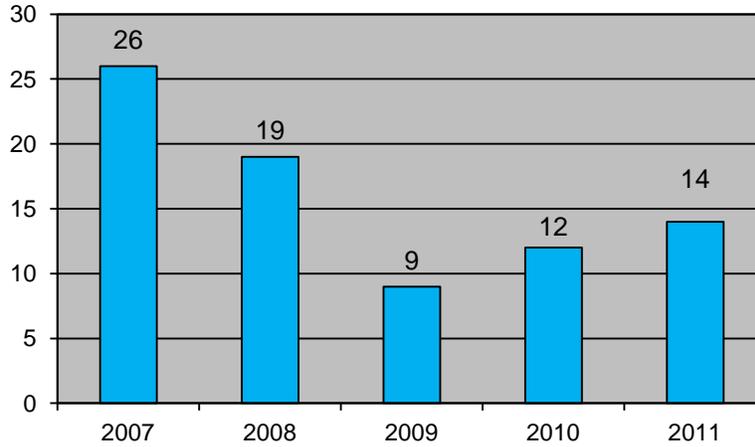
### City Ward Redistricting

After every decennial census, the City must revise its City Council wards to comply with federal laws. In 2011, the Planning & Development Dept. provided technical assistance to the consultant hired to lead this process. To comply with the federal requirement of "one-person/one-vote," each ward must have roughly the same number of people, and at least two of the wards have to be "majority minority" in order to meet the Voting Rights Act. Due to changes in where population growth has occurred since 2000, several ward boundaries shifted. After open house meetings were held to get public feedback, the new wards were adopted by City Council.

## 2011 Annual Report

Of the cases reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Commission, rezoning cases are generally the most significant in terms of the impact on future development in High Point. Chart 4 shows the number of rezoning cases that were approved from 2007 through 2011.

**Chart 4: Approved Rezoning Cases from 2007 through 2011**



The number of approved rezoning cases increased slightly for the second year in a row, after dropping in 2008 and 2009 during “the Great Recession.” The total acreage rezoned, not including the approximately 3,000 acre expansion of the Airport Overlay District, also increased incrementally over the past two years, as shown in Table 5. However, it is still far short of the amount seen in 2007. Chart 5 compares the amount of residential and non-residential acreage rezoned in 2007 through 2011. The pattern that emerges is similar to what can be found with most of the development activity in the city over the past five years; a large drop off starting in 2008 followed by incremental increases over the past two years.

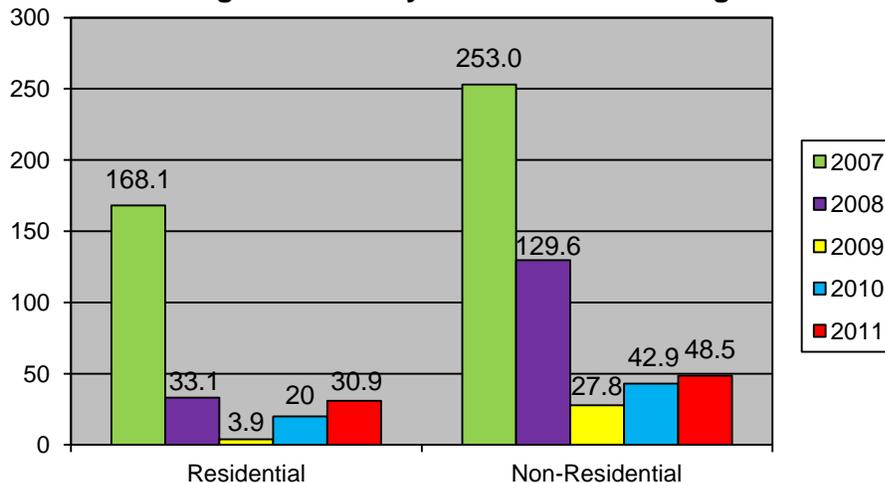
**Table 5: Approved Rezoning Cases and Acreage by Primary Use**

Year	Approved Rezoning Cases	Residential Acreage	Non-Residential Acreage	Mixed-Use Acreage	Total Acreage
2007	26	168.09	252.95	0.0	421.04
2008	19	33.10	129.60	0.0	162.70*
2009	9	3.9	27.79	0.0	31.69
2010	12	20.0	42.85	9.98	72.83
2011	14	30.91	48.49	0.0	79.40**

\* Does not include acreage of the Washington St. Mixed Use Center Overlay & Main Street District, and R-5 District

\*\* Does not include acreage of the Airport Overlay District

**Chart 5: Acreage Rezoned by Use from 2007 through 2011**



**City of High Point Planning & Development Department**

**Table 6: 2011 Approved Rezoning Cases**

#	Case	Acreage	Previous Zoning	New Zoning	CC Action
1	11-01	6.61	SC	CZ GO-H	4/18/11
2	11-02	0.28	LO	CZ PI	4/18/11
3	11-03	6.0	RS-7	CZ PI	4/18/11
4	11-04	7.0	RS-7	CZ PI	4/18/11
5	11-05	6.02	CU LB & CU GO-H	CZ LB	4/18/11
6	11-07	1.23	RS-7 & CU HB	CZ HB	7/18/11
7	11-08	1.06	CU GB & RS-7	CZ GB	9/19/11
8	11-09	16.71	RS-9 (Guilford County)	RS-9	9/19/11
9	11-10	2.0	AG (Guilford County)	RS-7	11/21/11
10	11-11	13.13	CU RM-8	CZ RM-8	11/21/11
11	11-12	7.0	RA-3 (Davidson County)	RM-8 & RM-12	1/17/12
12	11-13	8.2	CU HB & RS-12	CZ HB	12/19/11
13	11-14	4.2	CU RM-5	CZ RM-8	1/17/12
14	11-15	3,030	Various	Airport Overlay District	3/5/12



Construction of student housing at HPU



Construction of education building at HPU



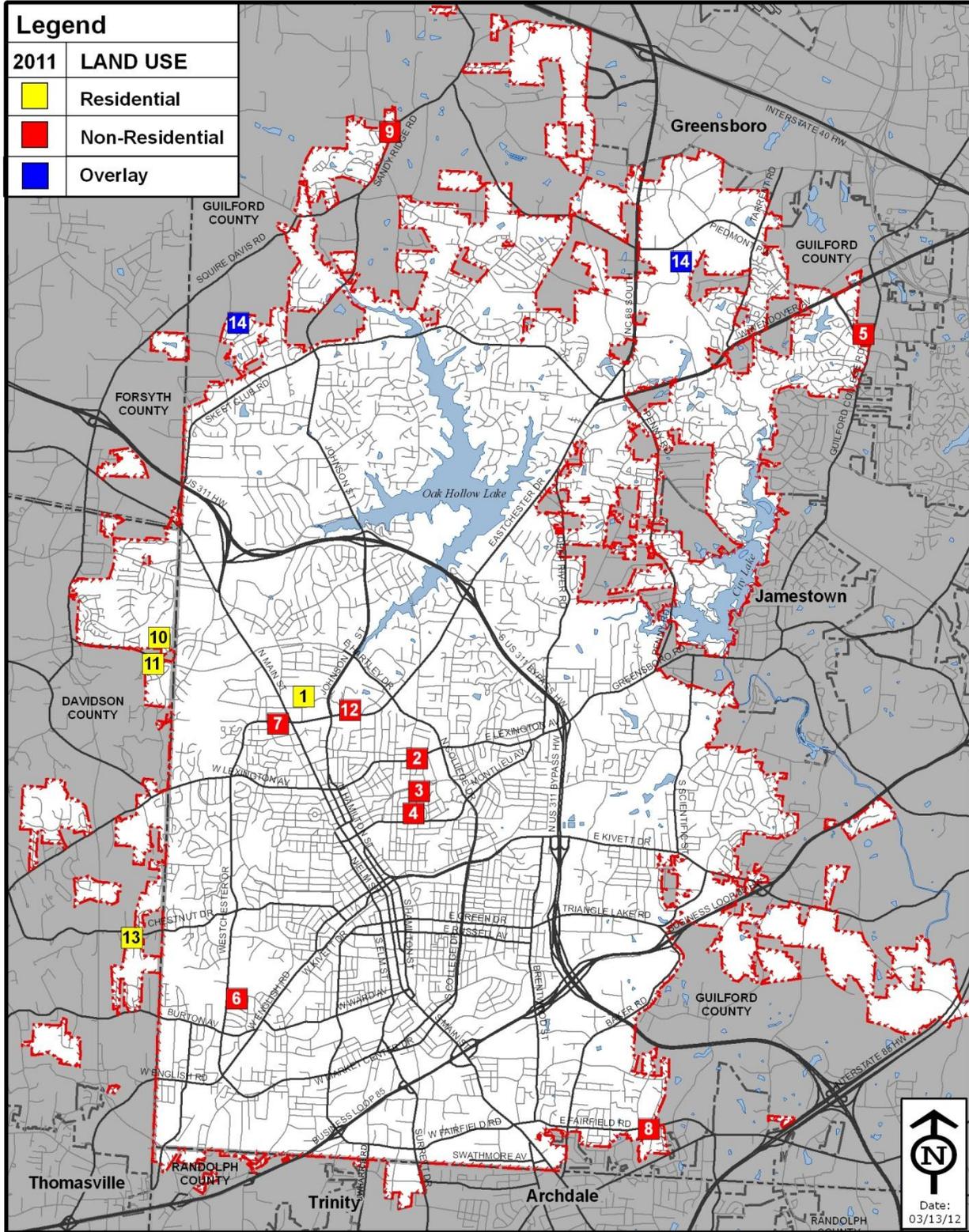
Site at Westover Ridge rezoned by case Z11-11



Extension of Hartley Drive

# 2011 APPROVED REZONING CASES

Note: See Table 6 for Map Reference



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## City of High Point Planning & Development Department

### Board of Adjustment

High Point's Board of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial body made up of five regular members plus several alternate members appointed by the City Council. As a quasi-judicial body, the Board considers requests during a hearing where applicants, opponents and staff submit evidence, and all discussion related to the case is limited to what is presented at the public hearing.

#### **Board of Adjustment**

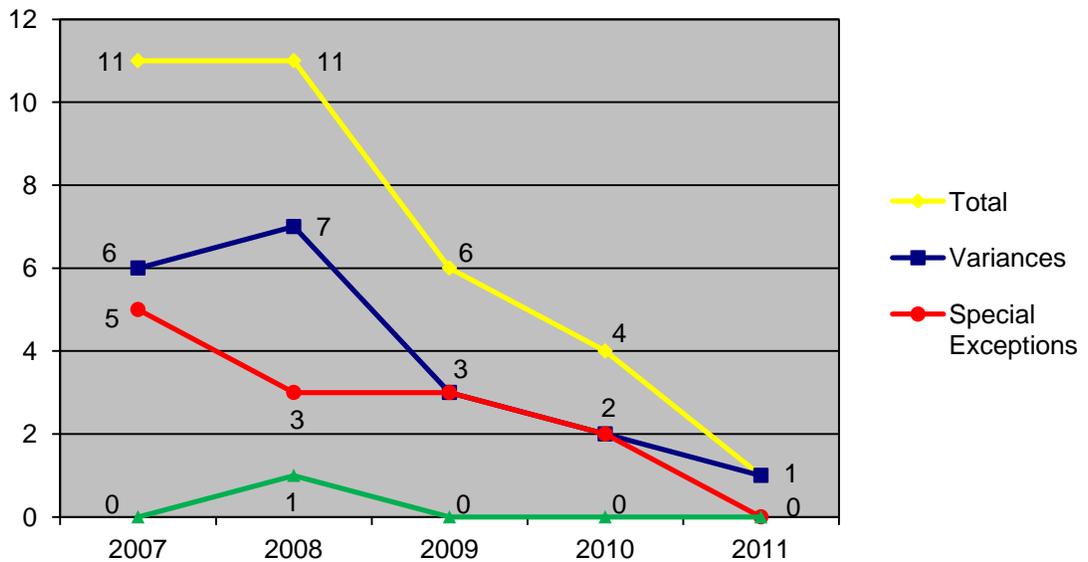
(as of Dec 31, 2011)

Allan B. Tarbell, Chair  
Ozzie Hough, Vice Chair  
Gregory Joseph Adzima  
Larry Barr, Sr.  
Harry W. Rowsey  
James C. Davis (Alternate)  
Gena Lester (Alternate)

The Board of Adjustment hears three types of cases – variances, special exceptions and appeals. Variances involve relief from the strictly literal interpretation and enforcement of zoning provisions of the Development Ordinance that would result in a property owner losing privileges shared by other properties in the same zoning district. A hardship or practical difficulty that is unique to the property, and not caused by the applicant, must be present for a variance to be approved. Special exceptions allow certain activities normally prohibited by zoning regulations, such as the expansion of a non-conforming use, as long as the activity meets the general intent of the regulations. Appeals heard by the Board relate to any zoning decision or interpretation made by Planning & Development Department staff relative to the Development Ordinance, or from decisions of other boards such as the Historic Preservation Commission.

Variances are typically the most common type of case heard in any given year. This past year the only case heard was a variance, which was approved. It was to allow an encroachment into a required setback so that an addition to an existing industrial building could be built. There were no special exception requests last year, and appeals are relatively rare, although one was heard in 2008 before eventually being withdrawn. The total number of cases heard by the Board of Adjustment has dropped steadily from 2008 to 2011, as shown in Chart 6.

**Chart 6: Total Cases Reviewed by Board of Adjustment**



## 2011 Annual Report

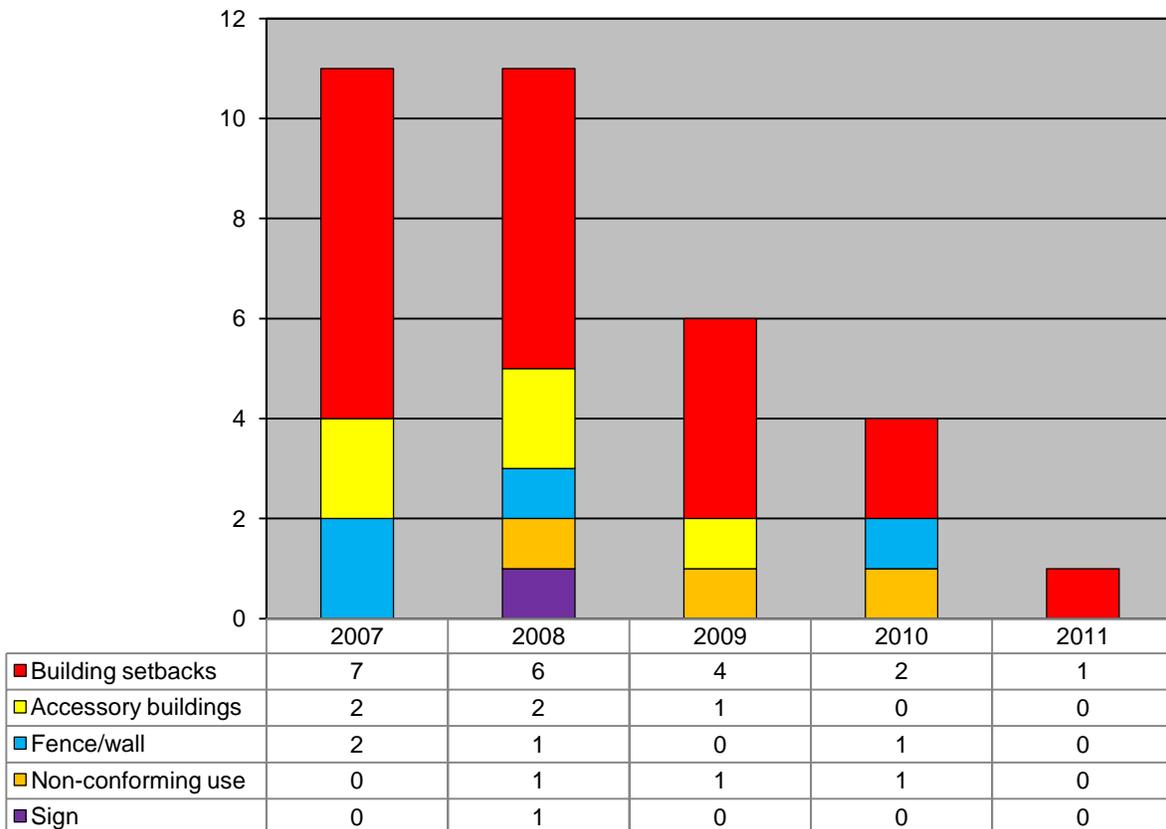
As shown in Table 7, the number of Board of Adjustment cases approved decreased, while the percentage of cases approved increased last year, but that is due to only having a single case last year, compared to multiple cases in previous years.

**Table 7: Results of Cases Reviewed by Board of Adjustment**

Year	Total Cases	Approved	Approved w/ Conditions	Denied	Withdrawn	% of Cases Approved
2007	11	4	0	2	5	36.4%
2008	11	6	1	1	3	63.6%
2009	6	3	2	0	1	83.3%
2010	4	1	1	2	0	50.0%
2011	1	1	0	0	0	100.0%

Chart 7 shows a breakdown of the different types of requests reviewed by the Board over the past five years. The most common type of request, including the one case reviewed in 2011, is to allow an encroachment into the building setbacks. It is important to note that a downward trend in Board of Adjustment cases is not necessarily a bad sign, because often this indicates that there are fewer problems with administering the development regulations as currently written. It may also be a reflection of efforts to make sure potential applicants are aware of the standards for approval, thus avoiding potentially frivolous cases from making it before the board. However, the drop off in development activity due to the economy is the strongest influence on the decrease in cases over the past three years.

**Chart 7: Types of Requests Reviewed by Board of Adjustment**



**City of High Point Planning & Development Department**

**Historic Preservation Commission**

High Point’s Historic Preservation Commission is a nine-member body appointed by the City Council. In the past, only one member could be appointed from each of the City’s three historic districts – Johnson Street (Johnson St. between E. Lexington Ave. & E. Parkway Ave.), Sherrod Park (Woodrow Ave. between N. Hamilton St. & Forrest St.), and West High Avenue (Oak St. between W. High Ave. & Green Dr.). However, changes to the rules on membership adopted in 2010 removed the limitation on the number of members that could be appointed from each district. Instead members are appointed based solely on their demonstrated experience or interest in historic preservation, architectural history or other related disciplines. The Commission promotes historic preservation, and examines historic designations for properties and districts with historic significance. For example, in 2010 a new national register historic district was created along Washington Street, and in 2011 the City was awarded a grant to prepare a national register district nomination for several neighborhoods near North Main Street.

**Historic Preservation Commission**  
 (as of Dec. 31, 2011)  
 Amy MacArthur (Johnson St.), Chair  
 Shane Brown, Vice Chair  
 Julius Clark  
 Steven Dudash (Johnson St.)  
 Peter Freeman  
 Pat Garton (Sherrod Park)  
 Mary Burdell Knight  
 Diane Peace  
 Rick Shelton

One of the primary responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Commission is to review applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, which are required for exterior renovations to structures in the City’s three designated local historic districts. This helps ensure such renovations are in line with the historic characteristics of the property and the adopted design guidelines for historic districts. Staff can approve a variety of limited activities related to general maintenance and repair of historic structures and properties, referred to as minor works, which do not require review by the Commission. As shown in Table 8, there were a total of fourteen cases in 2011, double the number of the previous year. Five of last year’s Certificates of Appropriateness were located in the Sherrod Park Historic District, and one was in the Johnson Street Historic District. Five were approved and one was withdrawn after the hearing.

**Table 8: Historic Preservation Cases**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Certificates of Appropriateness</b>	<b>Minor Works</b>	<b>Total Cases</b>
2007	6	5	11
2008	4	2	6
2009	4	3	7
2010	4	3	7
2011	6	8	14



## 2011 Annual Report

### Staff Committees

#### Urban Forestry Committee

The Urban Forestry Committee is responsible for the implementation of the City's urban forestry program, which includes an annual work program, adopted urban forestry ordinance, and *Guidelines and Standard Practices for Trees*, which are in the process of being updated. The Committee also seeks ways to improve the City's tree related activities. For example, the Committee established the *Plant to Remember Memorial Tree Program* in 2010, and conducted an inventory of trees on public property in the Core City area last year, which was previously highlighted in the key projects section of this report.

#### **Urban Forestry Committee**

(as of Dec. 31, 2011)

Jeff Bodenheimer, Parks & Recreation  
Charles Collier, Electric  
Andy Piper, Planning & Development  
Ken Sult, Public Services

One of the Committee's responsibilities is to review applications to plant, maintain, or remove trees in City-controlled spaces. In addition, the Committee reviews and comments on tree related activities that do not require applications, investigates cases that might require applications, but ultimately do not, and in rare instances, presents appeals of their decisions to the City Council. Last year, only two applications were submitted, which was fewer than in previous years. One of the requests involved the removal and replanting of several trees as part of stormwater improvements near the intersection of Forrest Street and East Farriss Avenue, which was approved, and the other request was withdrawn prior to being reviewed.

**Table 9: Urban Forestry Requests**

Year	Applications	Reviews & Comments	Investigations	Appeals	Total Requests
2007	6	4	1	0	11
2008	7	0	0	1	8
2009	3	3	3	0	9
2010	4	4	3	1	12
2011	2	4	2	0	8

The Committee is also responsible for submitting the City's annual Tree City USA application every December. High Point received this award from the National Arbor Day Foundation for the eighth year in a row for its work in 2011, along with its first ever Tree City USA Growth Award recognizing significant improvements to the program. One of the requirements is to observe Arbor Day, which was celebrated on April 16, 2011 at the Piedmont Environmental Center following training sessions for tree inventory volunteers. The Midweek Garden Club provided lunch and a representative from the N.C. Division of Forest Resources presented the Tree City USA award to Mayor Becky Smothers.

#### ***"Plant to Remember" Memorial Tree Program***

In the fall of 2010 and continuing through spring 2011 the City launched a memorial tree program to give people the opportunity to plant a tree in honor or memory of a loved one. A total of 19 trees were planted in public spaces during the inaugural season. Honorees receive a certificate, and their names are listed on the program's webpage and placed on a plaque displayed at the High Point library. The second season of memorial tree plantings kicked off in November 2011 and five additional trees have been planted so far. Anyone interested in finding out more can visit: [www.highpointnc.gov/plan/memorial\\_tree.cfm](http://www.highpointnc.gov/plan/memorial_tree.cfm).

## ***City of High Point Planning & Development Department***

### **Technical Review Committee**

The Technical Review Committee (TRC) reviews plans for proposed residential and non-residential subdivisions, including group development plans, apartments and condominium developments greater than 8 units, as well as other developments like shopping centers and office parks. The TRC's primary role is to determine if proposals meet the development regulations and can be adequately served by public services in a timely and cost effective way. There is also a Watershed Subcommittee whose primary role is to determine if development proposals within any of the city's drinking water supply watersheds meet the applicable development standards related to water quality.

#### **Technical Review Committee**

**(as of Dec. 31, 2011)**

Mark Schroeder, Planning & Development  
Katherine Bossi, Planning & Development  
Scott Dingus, Engineering Services  
Vince Hedgepeth, Electric  
Don Hinshaw, Fire  
Lee Hunt, Police  
Amandeep Mann, Transportation  
Scott Cherry, Public Services  
Allen Oliver, Parks & Recreation

#### **Watershed Subcommittee**

**(as of Dec. 31, 2011)**

Derrick Boone, Public Services  
Terry Kuneff, Engineering Services  
Mark Schroeder, Planning & Development

The TRC reviews and approves a variety of different development related submissions, including minor subdivisions, major subdivisions, integrated multiple use developments (IMUD's), group developments, and site plans, as well as street abandonments. However, it is important to note that the TRC only reviews development projects over 15,000 square feet in size. As a result, there may be many smaller projects that are not subject to TRC review, which results in a higher number of building permits being issued during the year regardless of the amount of TRC activity.

### ***High Point University Expansion***

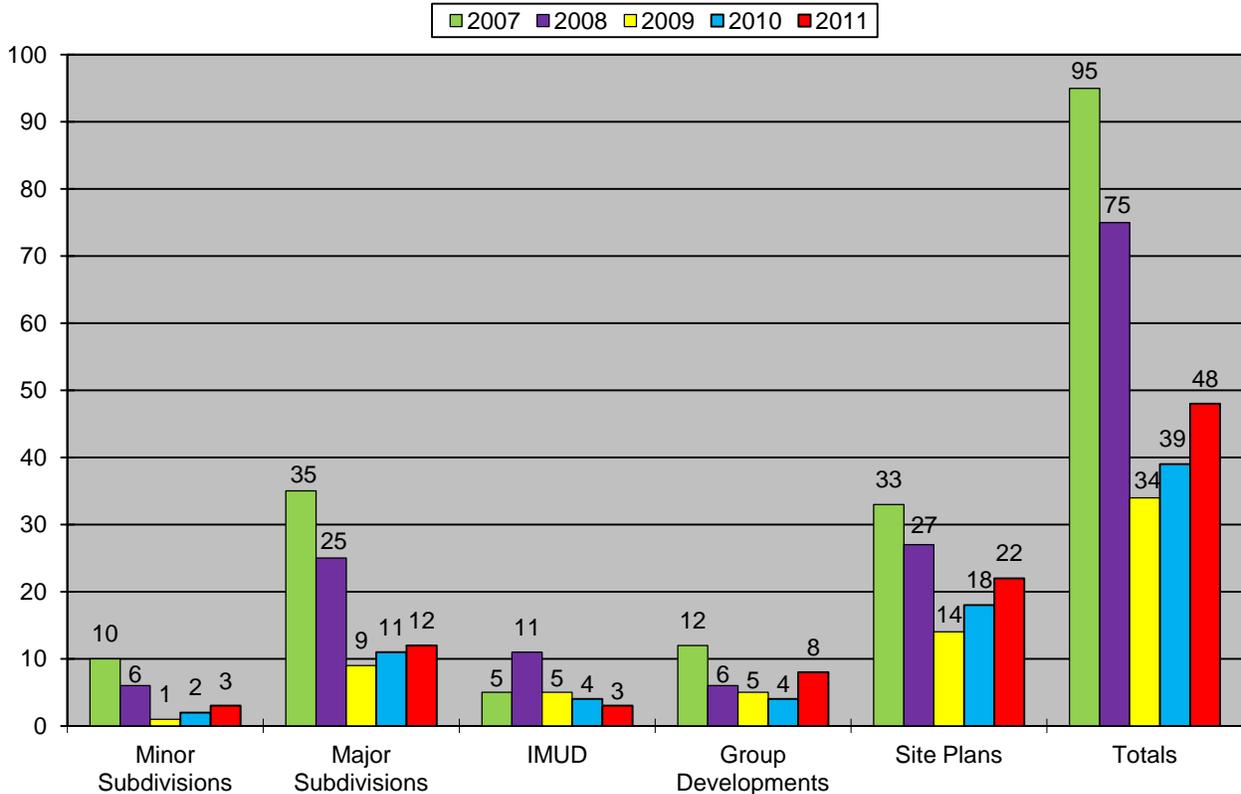
Over the past several years, High Point University has been expanding its campus. In 2011 there were several significant projects under construction. This included the completion of a Greek Village to house fraternities and sororities (below left), rehabilitation of the former Wesleyan Arms retirement center to house students, and start of construction on a new townhouse-style development for students (below right) and a future education building. The university also purchased Oak Hollow Mall, although it continues to be operated as a shopping center.



## 2011 Annual Report

Chart 8 illustrates some of the more common types of projects over the 15,000 sq. ft. threshold that required at least some aspect to be reviewed by the Technical Review Committee from 2007 to 2011. While there was an increase in the total number of projects reviewed for the second consecutive year, development activity still did not come close to the levels reached before the economic downturn. This is consistent with the trend seen in other measures of development activity.

**Chart 8: Projects Reviewed by Technical Review Committee**



In trying to get a sense of the amount of development occurring in the city, the number of Technical Review Committee projects approved is a better indicator than the number of projects reviewed. Also, the way projects are categorized for the purpose of TRC review does not always reflect the use that will eventually result from a project. Table 10 on the next page shows the types of projects that were approved by the TRC over the past three years according to more general land use categories. It also shows the number of lots/units for residential uses, the amount of building square footage for non-residential uses, and the acreage for each use.

### ***Changes to Existing Residential Developments***

Over the past couple of years there has been an increase in land developers reconfiguring layouts of previously approved residential developments, primarily due to changes in the economy and housing market. While these reconfigurations are not reflected in the figures for the annual report, because they typically do not result in new units, this is a significant trend worth noting. Eventually, if these projects become viable again, they will result in residential permit activity. Another positive trend that cannot be shown in the numbers, but has been reported by staff anecdotally, is an increase in the number of inquiries about permit requirements. This may also be a possible precursor for increased development activity.

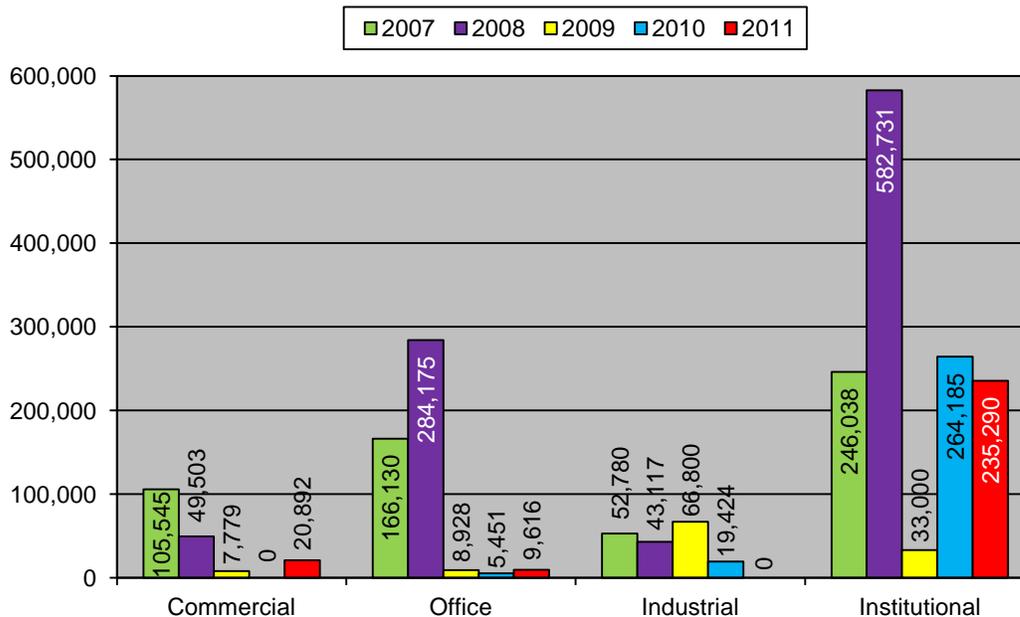
**City of High Point Planning & Development Department**

**Table 10: Projects Approved by Technical Review Committee**

Project Type	2009				2010				2011			
	Projects	Lots/Units	Non-Residential Square Footage	Acreage	Projects	Lots/Units	Non-Residential Square Footage	Acreage	Projects	Lots/Units	Non-Residential Square Footage	Acreage
Detached Single Family Residential	2	29	N/A	7.39	1	13	N/A	3.02	3	44	N/A	9.87
Attached Single Family Residential	3	21	N/A	7.17	3	14	N/A	1.45	4	124	N/A	32.59
Multi-family Residential	2	76	N/A	4.85	0	0	N/A	0	2	98	N/A	5.00
Commercial	2	N/A	7,779	2.84	0	N/A	0	0	3	N/A	20,892	3.97
Office	1	N/A	8,928	1.34	1	N/A	5,451	0.93	2	N/A	9,616	5.17
Industrial	2	N/A	66,800	11.09	2	N/A	19,424	14.52	0	N/A	0	0
Institutional	1	N/A	33,000	13.86	4	N/A	264,185	162.30	4	N/A	235,290	47.16
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>116,507</b>	<b>48.54</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>289,060</b>	<b>182.22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>265,798</b>	<b>77.11</b>

In 2011, there was a fairly significant rebound in the number of both detached and attached single family lots, as well as multi-family residential units. As discussed previously, this is consistent with the trend of early recovery from the economic recession that started in 2008. There was also an increase in the amount of commercial and office square footage approved. However, no industrial projects were approved, and there was a decrease in the amount of institutional development, although this category still remained the largest portion of the overall amount of non-residential square footage approved. Chart 9 compares the amount of non-residential square footage approved by the TRC over the last five years.

**Chart 9: Non-Residential Square Footage by Use from 2007 through 2011**

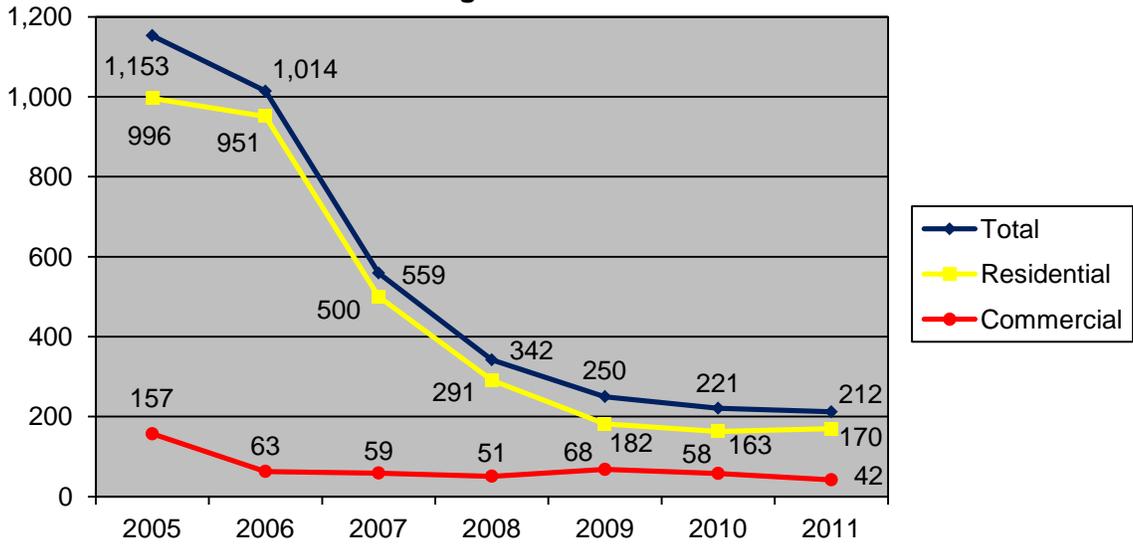


**Permits and Code Enforcement**

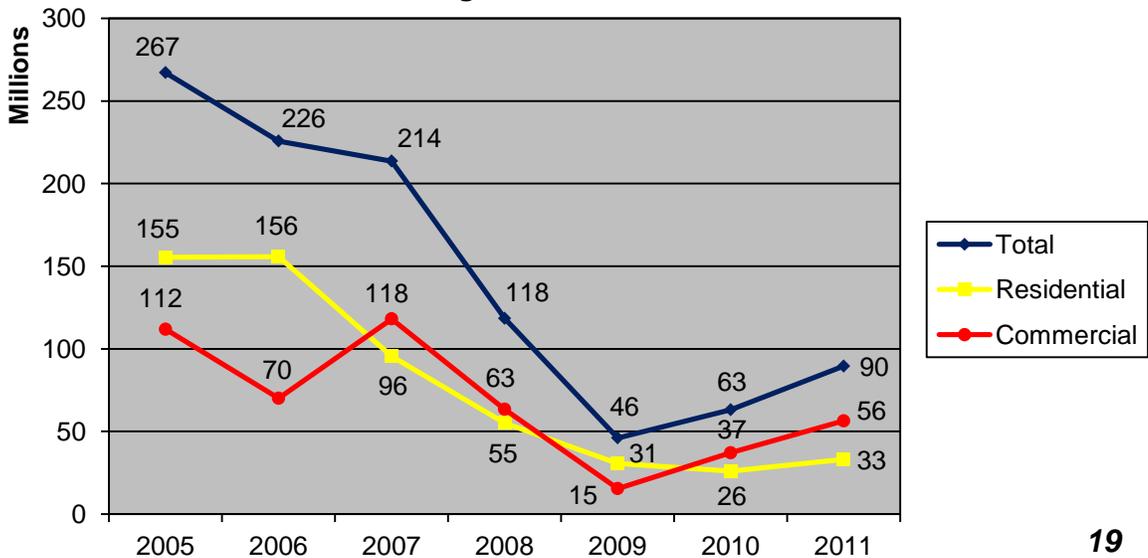
**Building Permits**

The Department reviews and issues permits for a variety of building activities. As shown in Chart 10, approximately 4% fewer building permits for new construction were issued in 2011 compared to the previous year. However, there was an approximately 4% increase in the number of permits for new single family homes, the first increase in five years. By comparison, there was an approximately 10% decrease in this category from 2009 to 2010, and an overall drop of almost 84% from the high mark of 996 in 2005 to the low point in 2010. The drop in the total number of permits last year is due to an approximately 28% decrease in permits for new commercial construction. However, as shown in Chart 11, the total value of new permits in 2011 went up for a second consecutive year. This is primarily due to an approximately 51% increase in the value of new commercial construction, despite the fewer number of commercial permits. The value of new residential construction also went up for the first time since 2006, as might be expected given the rise in residential permits.

**Chart 10: Number of Building Permits for New Construction**



**Chart 11: Value of Building Permits for New Construction**



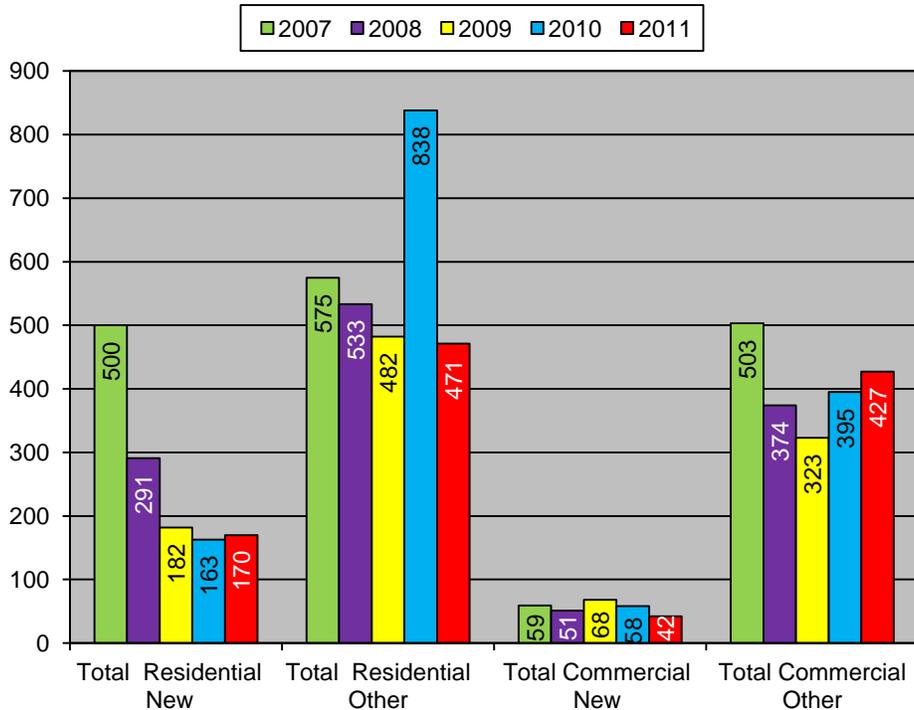
**City of High Point Planning & Development Department**

Table 11 shows the overall number of building permits issued in 2011 by type. The table categorizes the permits by whether they are residential or commercial, and whether they are new or other. “New” permits are those that established a new use for a site, while the “other” category includes activities related to existing uses, such as accessory buildings, demolitions, additions, repairs, and interior alterations, decks or tenant upfits. The detached single family residential category includes permits for single family dwellings, as well as modular and manufactured housing, while the attached single family residential category includes duplexes and townhomes. Permits for multi-family buildings are included in the commercial category, although the number of permits does not reflect the actual number of multi-family units. Including apartments, there were a total of 220 residential units approved in 2011, compared to 335 in 2010. The commercial category also includes all other non-residential uses, such as retail, office, industrial, or institutional buildings. Chart 12 below shows the distribution of permits in each category over the last five years.

**Table 11: 2011 Building Permits by Type**

Category	Total Residential New	Total Residential Other	Total Commercial New	Total Commercial Other
Detached Single Family	151	--	--	--
Attached Single Family	19	--	--	--
Accessory Buildings	--	19	--	--
Demolitions	--	78	--	12
Additions	--	68	--	26
Repairs	--	178	--	59
Alterations/Decks/Tenant Upfits	--	128	--	330
Commercial Buildings	--	--	42	--

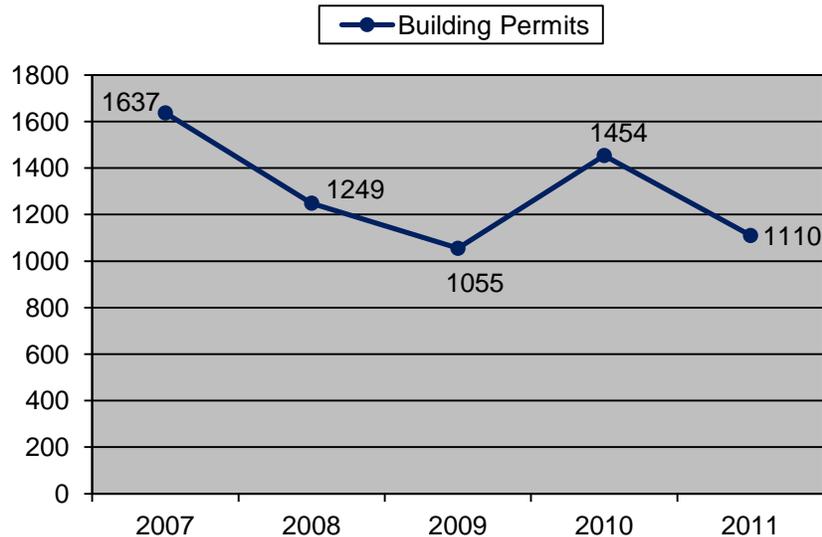
**Chart 12: Total Building Permits Issued 2007 through 2011**



## 2011 Annual Report

Chart 13 shows the distribution of building permits issued over the past five years, regardless of type. There was an approximately 24% decrease in the total number of building permits issued in 2011, which is a reversal of the trend seen in 2010, when building permits went up for the first time in five years. Last year's decrease appears to reflect a drop in "other" residential permits, particularly repairs and residential alterations, which spiked to unprecedented levels in 2010.

**Chart 13: Building Permits Issued by Year**



### ***Proof That Not All Significant Projects Are New Construction***

The rehabilitation of the Sheraton Towers in 2011 is an example of a significant project for the year. Although it is not new construction and dealt primarily with interior work to the building, the renovations were valued at \$4.5 million dollars. The building also provides residential living for seniors and ground floor commercial spaces, which are needed in the downtown area. Existing buildings that have become vacant also provide opportunities for small businesses to move in and renovate, like when the Blue Zucchini & Company restaurant occupied the former Grateful Bread restaurant located in the Uptowne area.

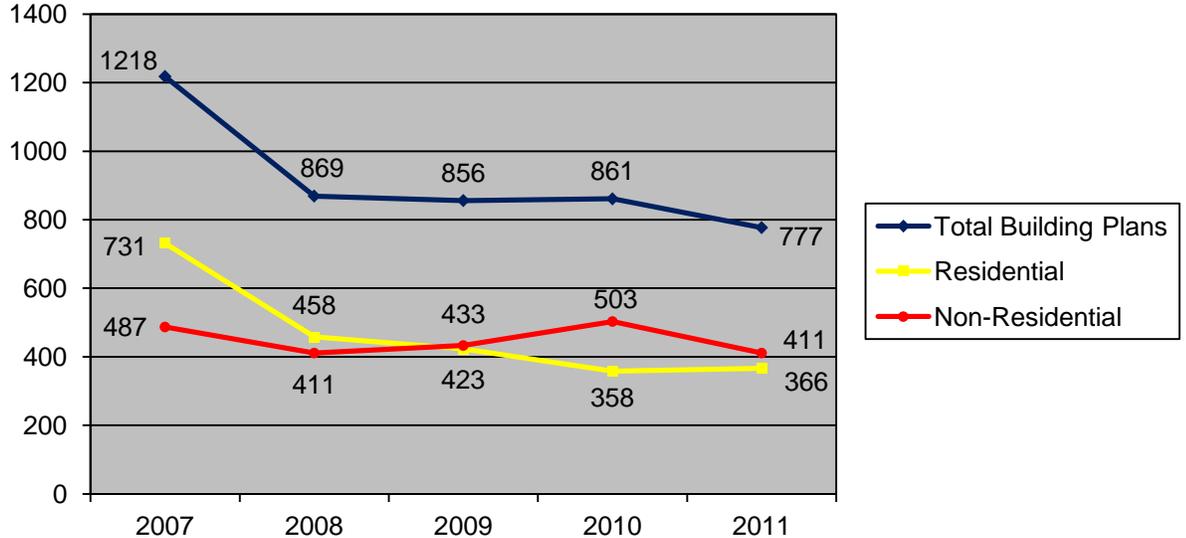


## City of High Point Planning & Development Department

### Building Construction Plans

As shown in Chart 14, the Department reviewed a total of 777 building construction plans in 2011, which is an approximately 10% drop compared to the previous year. However, this is significantly less than the 29% drop in building plans reviewed from 2007 to 2008. For the third consecutive year the majority of plans reviewed were for commercial construction, although the gap closed in 2011. The number of commercial construction plans decreased by 18% last year, back to the same level as 2008, while residential plans went up for the first time in five years after declining by approximately 65% from the peak of 1,035 in 2006 to the low point in 2010.

**Chart 14: Building Construction Plans Reviewed by Year**



For the third year in a row, there were more building construction plans reviewed than building permits issued. Typically, multiple permits are issued for each building plan. However, some of the plans reviewed may not result in any building permits. There is also a lag between the time building plans are reviewed and the time building permits are issued. Therefore, some of the permits issued in 2010 may be for plans that were reviewed in late 2009, while some of the plans reviewed in 2010 may not have building permits issued until sometime in 2011.

### Local Code Enforcement

In addition to plan review and issuance of building permits, the Department is also responsible for the enforcement of local codes regarding zoning violations, junk vehicles, public nuisances, and minimum housing standards. Zoning violations address a variety of issues related to nonconformance with regulations in the Development Ordinance. Junk vehicle codes address any vehicle that does not display a current license plate, cannot be driven as it was intended, is partially or wholly dismantled or wrecked and could be considered a health, fire or safety hazard. Public nuisance codes address such items as dense growth of grass and weeds exceeding twelve inches in height, any concentration of trash and debris, open storage of household furniture or appliances, and any open or unsecured dwelling or commercial building. The minimum housing codes ensure that any renter or owner occupied dwelling complies with basic structural, sanitary and cosmetic requirements in order to be considered “fit for human habitation.” Table 12 outlines the Department’s local code enforcement over the past five years.

## 2011 Annual Report

**Table 12: Local Code Enforcement Violations Issued**

Year	Zoning Violations	Junk Vehicles	Public Nuisances	Minimum Housing
2007	311	228	1,585	151
2008	335	225	1,679	153
2009	310	87	2,254	327
2010	284	41	2,544	320
2011	148	117	1,821	187

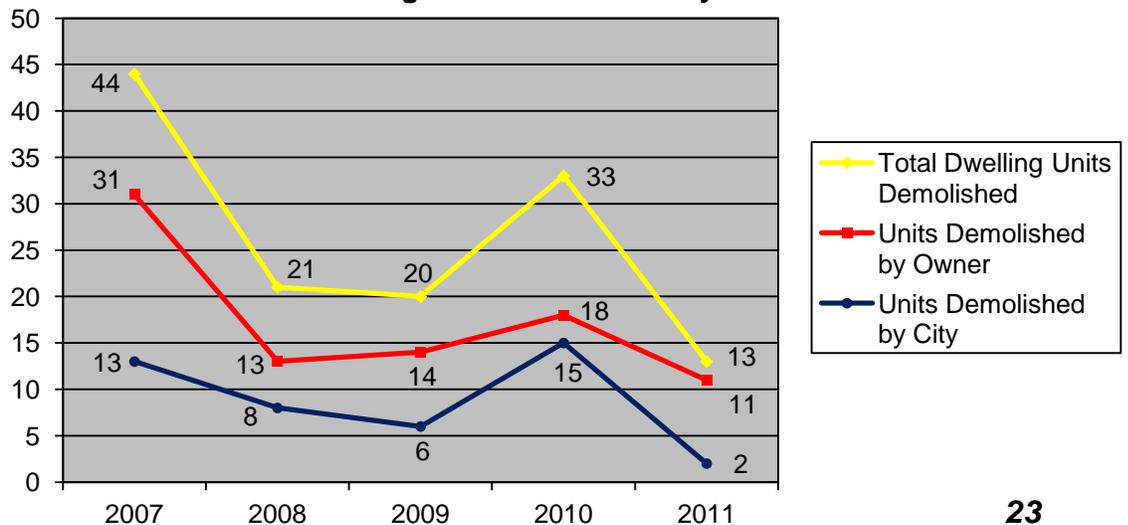
The drop off in the number of local codes violations in 2011 is most likely a reflection of the increased focus that was placed on enforcement activities over the past couple of years due to the economic downturn. For example, the number of public nuisances and minimum housing violations last year was still high in comparison to 2007 and 2008 figures, but did not reach the levels seen in 2009 and 2010 when the issue of deteriorating conditions in many neighborhoods was first given a high priority. It might also be a sign that conditions are starting to improve.

Table 13 outlines the Department's minimum housing code enforcement activities over the past five years, including the amount of money spent by the City to demolish dwellings considered unfit for habitation, as well as the number of unfit dwelling units secured and demolished by the owner. The relative decrease in minimum housing code activities could reflect the previously noted drop off following an increased focus over the last two years, or indication of a stabilization in housing conditions now that the economy is starting to improve. Chart 15 shows the number of unsafe dwelling units demolished by both the City and private property owners over the past five years.

**Table 13: Minimum Housing Code Enforcement Activities**

Year	Units Secured by City	Units Secured by Owner	Units Demolished by City	\$ Spent by City on Demolitions	Units Demolished by Owner
2007	10	N/A	13	\$49,602	31
2008	7	N/A	8	\$30,800	13
2009	24	N/A	6	\$19,350	14
2010	22	23	15	\$44,047	18
2011	17	47	2	\$2,231	11

**Chart 15: Unsafe Dwelling Units Demolished by Year**



## ***City of High Point Planning & Development Department***

The tables on the previous page only include the number of violations issued and not the large number of properties that were investigated for possible violations, but which were not cited. For example, there were a total of 2,131 public nuisance inspections in 2011, of which 1,821 ended up being violations. Many potential violations are resolved because the property is brought into compliance after discussing the issue with a code enforcement officer. These investigations represent a large part of the local code enforcement staff's workload.

The activity that makes up the largest share of the Inspections Divisions work load is construction inspections. This includes initial inspections, which are the first time an inspector reviews the work to determine if it has been done according to code, and follow-up inspections, which are conducted for work that has been previously inspected but was not approved due to an issue (or issues) that needed to be corrected. In 2011 there were 10,768 initial inspections and 3,922 follow-up inspections for residential building permits, and 7,663 initial inspections and 2,355 follow-up inspections for commercial building permits. In addition to their normal activities, inspectors also made significant contributions outside their original scope of work in 2011. This included conducting 359 home energy audits that identified ways for homeowners to conserve energy, and assisting the Customer Service Department by turning on and off 1,496 utility connections from January through July. This was despite a decrease in staff due to the hiring freeze put in place for the entire City. These are examples of how Planning and Development staff is working to address new issues of concern to further the goal of creating a more livable city.

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**MISSION**

**SHAPING A MORE LIVABLE HIGH POINT**

**We accomplish our mission by:**

- **Facilitating and promoting a shared, comprehensive plan for the development of the community that advances a quality environment, both natural and built;**
- **Creating strategies that guide development in a manner that protects and enhances the community; and by**
- **Administering services that implement the comprehensive plan and form a safe, sustainable and livable place.**

**NORTH CAROLINA'S INTERNATIONAL CITY™**

The Planning & Development Department provides services to its clients and customers through its Planning Services, Development Services, and Inspection Services Divisions, with internal support provided by the Administration Unit. For more information about each division's roles and responsibilities please visit the Department's website at: <http://www.highpointnc.gov/plan>.