



VISION 2027

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Official Seal of the Town of Knightdale embodies a train, cotton, a tobacco leaf, and a pine tree; symbols of Knightdale's historic beginnings and economic origins say much about her citizens' desires for Knightdale's future. It is known that the physical, built form of a town reflects the vision ~ or lack of vision ~ that influences the decision making processes. For example, every community would like to see its local economy enhanced by development, but those communities do not have to rely upon the dictates of others unfamiliar with that community's aspirations and whose actions can compromise those aspirations as the community pursues a more prosperous future.

Knightdale is in an enviable location that few communities share and the question becomes not "will" Knightdale grow; the question is "how". The Town of Knightdale is confident that it will grow because of the following reasons:

- Proximity to major employment centers, major universities and colleges;
- Ease of access (Two major freeways will run through the town by 2006);
- Potential to utilize the existing rail corridor for enhanced freight and / or passenger service;
- Availability of large parcels of undeveloped land adjacent to transportation corridors;
- Availability of public utilities; and,
- Rapid residential growth (Knightdale's resident population grew an astounding 216% between 1990 and 2000, one of the fastest rates in the state.)



1963 Raleigh-Durham Airport



1963 Beltway Construction



1963 Planning RTP

*Visions from the 1960's  
from NC Department of Commerce*



*In November, 1996 the Town of Huntersville discarded its old zoning ordinance and replaced it with a new ordinance modeled upon the principles of traditional town planning. Of great concern to the individuals who drafted Huntersville's new growth policies was the fact that suburban sprawl oftentimes eradicates a town's uniqueness by establishing conventional building patterns that disrespect the existing fabric of the community. Huntersville has, until very recently, been a small rural town with a modest central business district, numerous working farms, and extensive woodlands. Certainly no one expects Huntersville to remain this way forever---but there are steps that can be taken to accommodate new development that respects the values and characteristics that are unique to Huntersville.*

*The irony of most suburban development is that it often promises "life in the country" but typically delivers a finished product that, when combined with other suburban development, eliminates the "country" characteristics that drew new residents and businesses in the first place.*

Town of Huntersville (NC)  
Town Planning Philosophy

## II. OVERALL GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Knightdale provides a functional framework to guide in the development and implementation of a vision that promotes the following goals:

1. Maintain a respect for the existing relationship between rural and urban Knightdale; the old English concept of town building based upon "town and country" is the foundation of this Plan;
2. Provide equal opportunity to all Knightdale citizens, including equal access to facilities and opportunities of the Town and region;
3. Provide safe, dynamic and sustainable neighborhoods, which offer employment opportunities, high quality education, adequate and affordable shelter, health care, and recreational amenities;
4. Provide a vibrant and varied local economy, which will attract and support a wide diversity of business opportunities and community services;
5. Provide balanced and responsible urban design, planning and development, and protection of the Town's historical, cultural, and natural resources;
6. Provide an open, accessible, responsive, and fiscally responsible government whose structure creates the functional framework to meet the goals of the Plan.

The goals as outlined are the result of several years of learning, listening, and communicating with citizens, town officials, the development community, and plan consultants. Knightdale's Comprehensive Plan Update Committee and the Town's Planning Staff agreed that because the Town possesses a unique, and enviable, geographic position within a nationally-recognized economic center and because of improving accessibility and regional growth, Knightdale can afford to imagine a proactive future, guided by the expressed desires of her citizens.

While demonstrating a desire for growth and development, the Town should seek to minimize the negative impacts of growth, and always, expect that new development will contribute to the overall health and function of the Town. In the final analysis, the



Comprehensive Plan Update Committee hopes that the decisions made by the Town in the coming years will contribute to the building of a legacy that benefits the generations that follow us.

Realizing the overall vision for Knightdale requires clear, attainable objectives that address central issues facing the Town. Action items, or tasks to be completed, to achieve these objectives are provided to guide the Town's planning and implementation strategies. The objectives and actions items throughout the document are tasks by which the Town can measure its progress in fulfilling the vision for Knightdale's future. The objectives and action items are formed by local desires, current conditions, future trends and opportunities.

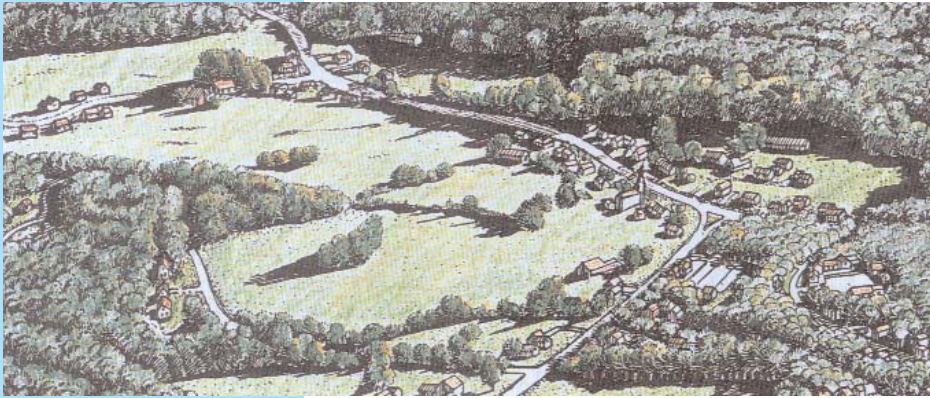
In crafting a vision for Knightdale, public participation played a key role in understanding what it was the public envisioned for the future of the Town. Feedback in the form of phone calls and email, discussion at meetings and written comments from a visual preference survey provided a common theme that prevailed from the people of Knightdale. The following summarizes the most common concerns and issues as stated by the people. These specific statements were made at the June 2002 Landowner's Workshop (**The full summary of the June 12, 2002 Public Planning Workshop is at the end of Chapter 2 as Figure 2.1**):

- Preserve some of the rural character...farms, and natural areas.
- Retain the small-town atmosphere.
- Expand economic opportunities, broaden our local economy.
- Expand housing choice.
- Improve transportation choices. Make it easier to walk, get to Raleigh
- Preserve and enhance our unique character
- Preserve our history
- Continue to make Knightdale more attractive
- Knightdale has so much potential it does not have to settle for less.

Creating the vision of what Knightdale can be in 2027 meant mixing what the public said with what the staff, committee and consultants learned about the town's resources, constraints, and future trends. A number of questions were posed throughout the visioning process by the Update Committee and included the following:

**What are the precedents that should be followed?**

The project team looked to Raleigh's Cameron Park neighborhood; the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson and Huntersville, NC, and English town building concepts as citizens expressed a strong desire to maintain a small town



atmosphere and preserve rural areas.

#### **What could be learned from other places?**

After studying a number of scenarios from existing towns, it was identified that transportation corridors determine where and how development occurs, that existing infrastructure can be maximized, and that the Town can be required to maintain a high standard of development.

#### **Could the Town imitate successes from other places?**

The project team understands that many 'new places' have components which may be duplicated from 'old places.' New towns and developments take many design features from old towns, such as Charleston, South Carolina or Savannah, Georgia. These towns have become major tourist attractions for a reason...and the question is, does Knightdale want to become 'Everywhere, USA' or does Knightdale want to have a unique small town character which is memorable to its citizens and visitors?

#### **What tools do we need?**

Strong leadership is one of the most important 'tools' available as the Town's leaders make important decisions about land use and town creation. Vision is another important tool. The vision outlined in this Plan is the result of active public participation which dictates how the town will grow over the next 25 years. Sound planning principles are also critical and require implementation of a well written zoning and subdivision ordinance and sound town policies on issues such as annexation and extension of water and sewer.

#### **What can be the Town's future?**

It's not unrealistic to imagine that Knightdale can continue to be a regional leader in town building and that Knightdale can continue to grow in a quality fashion. Growth pressures due to the Town's location are ever increasing and with the right tools in place, Knightdale can have a prosperous future.

The people's vision for Knightdale in 2027 can be summarized by the term, "Town and Country" and the specifics of this vision can be found throughout this document, from the Design District Master Plan to the Focus Area Plans, where one can find summaries of projects for Knightdale's future that will contribute to the creation of a community for which future generations will be grateful.



## **FIGURE 2.1**

### **Summary of June 12, 2002 Public Planning Workshop**

After an introduction about the importance of the comprehensive planning process to the aesthetic, economic, environmental, fiscal, and functional future of the Town of Knightdale, Councilman Chalk welcomed the opportunity to participate in a short conversation with workshop participants. Following a brief discourse, the participants then split up into three groups of 4 - 5 people. The groups were comprised of the same general cross-section of residents as the larger whole.

They were asked to discuss the action plan issues as proposed by Cole Jenest & Stone, one of our consultants on the Comprehensive Plan update team. To guarantee impartiality, Councilman Chalk conceived of a spatial arrangement of tables in the Council Chambers to ensure that each group would function independently of the other groups outside of the audible range of each other. His layout worked remarkably well ~ as each group focused in its own members ~ no "sharing" of thoughts was witnessed between groups during process.

Nevertheless, there was surprising consensus among the groups on most of the issues. In particular, the groups desired to retain the "small-town character" of Knightdale while recognizing that preventing growth to preserve that character was not desirable. The group optimistically suggested tactics, policies, and plans the Town should pursue that would maintain the qualities of a small-town while accommodating growth and enhancing the benefits of our proximity to a major U.S. city. Everyone agreed that our greatest potential in the future would lay in the enhancement and preservation of a unique character for Knightdale and that we should avoid losing our qualities even as we continued to be integrated into the larger regional engine.

A specific recounting of group responses to the action plan issues:

#### **WHAT ELEMENTS WOULD MAKE KNIGHTDALE A DISTINCT AND MEMORABLE TOWN?**

Group 1:

- "Small town atmosphere"
- "Country life with city perks"
- "Safety"
- "Distinctive / upscale shopping (quaint downtown)"

Group 2:

- "Small town atmosphere"

"Different street standards - small scale"

"No more cul-de-sac(s)"

Group 3:

"A strong comprehensive plan implemented (sic) by zoning, ordinances etc. - community vision"

"Uniform design standards"

"Differentiate ourselves from our surrounding communities - East Raleigh - etc."

#### **LAND USE AND GROWTH**

Group 1:

"Why do comprehensive plan if someone can randomly change it - need to change zoning to implement the Comp. Plan."

Group 2:

"Create a plan to put high density where we want it."

"New zoning districts"

"Neighborhood streets"

"No landfill!"

"Place a section away from (existing) residential for high density & commercial"

Group 3:

"Need future land use map"

"Implement new zoning and ordinances to encourage growth in accordance with new plan"

#### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Group 1:

"Revitalize downtown - commuter rail"

Group 2:

"Protect our downtown"

"Protect existing quality of life"

"More open space"

"Connectivity"

"Link from past to future of Knightdale"

"Diversity"

Group 3:

"Old downtown, plantations"

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

Group 1:

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"Link North Knightdale with South K-Dale (sic)"

"Rail"

Group 2:

"Zone existing s/d (sic) property to protect from haphazard dev."

"Noads (sic) of development to connect back from edges of highways"

"Expand our roads and ease congestion (sic)"

"Train stop in K'dale properly zoned"

"Plan corridor along rail system"

Group 3:

"Develop regional political strength to influence transportation issues on a regional basis"

"As a municipality become local road builders. (Bonds paid for by impact fees)"

#### **BYPASS 64**

Group 1:

"Speed up link /connection from 540 to 64 bypass"

Group 2:

"Need to take control of interchanges in our ETJ and expand ETJ. Run water sewer."

#### **BUSINESS 64:**

Group 1:

"Less stoplights

"Synchronized lights"

Group 2:

"Prevent Bus. 64 from looking like hwy 70 in Clayton or Capital Blvd"

"Buffers and streetscapes"

Group 3:

"How do we retain existing large businesses. How do we promote quality long-term businesses. We need to be user friendly"

#### **SMITHFIELD ROAD**

Group 1:

"Pedestrian friendly aesthetically pleasing (landscaping)"

"Streetscaping - old fashioned lights. Meandering / winding, walkways, benches"

"Greenway connectivity"

Group 2:

"Important future connector from 64 bypass to Knightdale need to look at

future land use on this corridor - future 4 lane with median"

Group 3:

"Park and ride for train to RTP and downtown"

### **OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND RECREATION**

Group 1:

"Usable open space - a variety not specific to team sports"

"Connectivity localize parks - amphitheater - pool"

Group 2:

"More green space in each new s/d"

"Greenway system to connect K'dale"

Group 3:

"Preserve what little older growth that we have."

"Force developers to do lower impact development"

"Require natural areas"

"Need tax base growth for Parks and Recreation"

### **HOUSING**

Group 1:

"Better quality"

"Larger lots"

"Higher density"

"More varieties of builders"

"No more cookie-cutter garage doors on the street"

Group 2:

"Don't want to see manufactured housing as infill in existing s/d"

"Larger homes"

"A place for all homes"

Group 3:

"More upscale single-family homes."

"Balance with commercial, industrial."

### **RETAIL**

Group 1:

"More upscale / distinctive shops"

"Revitalize downtown buildings for shops, restaurants, cafes, etc"

"More variety"

"Less fast food, car wash, Quick Lubes"

Group 2:

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"Keep in roads (sic) from the edges of main highways"

"New ways to encourage employment based growth"

Group 3:

"More mixed-use - community integrated small store shopping"

**CATALYST PROJECTS**

Group 1:

"Industrial park"

"Wake Tech (Community College) extensions"

"Medical center"

Group 2:

"Good planning"

"Medicine"

"Have a large corporation / industry come to K'dale area like Bayer plant, Glaxo..."

"Hi-light / promote amphitheater at Park"

"Encourage the arts - music, drama, dance"

Group 3:

"Important to attract now before large land tracts are gone. Incentives? promotion? Chamber?"