

# Opportunities and Challenges of Each Scenario

## Decentralized Growth

### Opportunities

- Minimal regulation, development and enforcement costs
- Real estate market unencumbered

### Challenges

- Strong market pressure to convert agriculture to residential development
- Exacerbates existing residential/commercial tax base imbalance, increasing residential property tax burden
- Affordable housing remains a social challenge
- Expanded reliance on automobiles, results in increased commuting, drive time, and reduced transportation options; also negatively impacts community health and environment
- Increased costs of providing water, sewer, transportation and service infrastructure costs to residential developments
- Reduction in rural character and unique small towns and crossroads communities

## Compact Centers and Growth Corridors

### Opportunities

- Increases health and quality of life benefits from living in walkable compact communities
- Reduces transportation time, costs and negative health effects for shopping, recreation and attending school
- Increases commercial tax base and helps plug retail sales tax leakage
- Facilitates commuter mass transit options

### Challenges

- Continued and expanded negative health, quality of life, and environmental impacts of commuter traffic and lifestyle

- Does not provide higher paying employment opportunities for county residents, thereby resulting in lower wage retail and service jobs
- Does not provide a substantial improvement in the current residential/commercial tax base imbalance
- Substantial increase in new governmental infrastructure costs of providing water, sewer, and other services to widely dispersed mixed-use centers
- Does not contain a specific strategy for protecting rural character, agriculture and natural resources, except through meeting the demand for residential, retail and service within compact centers.
- Facilitates and encourages highway strip commercial development near and between compact centers, and between compact centers and towns along highway commuter corridors.

## Conservation/Farmland Preservation

### Opportunities

- Reduces residential sprawl footprint
- Greatest protection for existing and expanding agriculture, rural character, open-space, and natural resources
- Increases protection of drinking water sources, including Jordan Lake, Deep, Haw and Rocky Rivers and underground aquifers
- Least negative impact on climate change issues
- Working farms assume greater role in supplying local food and enhances possibility for growth of local food cluster

### Challenges

- Does little to reduce residential/commercial tax base imbalance and retail sales leakage
- Does not promote the creation of diverse employment in the county (agriculture will not provide much in the way of living wage full-time employment)
- Requires significant automobile transportation for jobs, commerce and recreation, which may negate some of the positive health, environmental and quality of life benefits of this strategy
- Assumes farm leaders, rural residents and community leaders will collaborate to preserve farms, including promoting agricultural zoning and purchasing development rights
- Lack of emphasis on expanding commercial and industrial tax base, making it difficult to provide the government funds necessary to implement key strategic development initiatives, including purchase of development rights

## Targeted Employment

### Opportunities

- Substantially reduces infrastructure and government services costs
- Reduces vehicle miles traveled and congestion in commuter corridors, which may improve community health and environment
- Greatly expands local quality job opportunities and their economic and quality of life multiplier effects
- Significantly, brands the county as an entity promoting economic development
- Reduces demand for rural housing developments and resulting pressure to reduce open space
- Greatly reduces residential/commercial tax base imbalance and retail sales tax leakage
- Allows for sufficient tax base to fund a purchase of development rights program to preserve agriculture and conservation areas
- Increases demand for local food shed products, particularly those produced by small sustainable agriculture farms
- Meets the demand of millennials and retiring baby boomers for living in walkable mixed-use urban communities
- Will attract highly educated, creative talent that will help expand our small business and entrepreneurial community.
- Higher density, urban municipalities will reduce the cost of providing affordable housing
- Increased tax base and a diversified workforce will provide the basis for improvement in the quality of public schools and the community college
- Local high paying jobs will provide opportunities for future generations to remain in Chatham County or return after college

### Challenges

- Long range planning issues involve the challenges of the maintenance of the rural character of the county, primarily agriculture and natural resources; strategic issues would minimize the inclusion of the various protection/conservation associations which have exhibited a strong presence and understanding as to the quality of life and conservation issues
- Upfront capital costs are higher than other scenarios
- Competition for high end employment centers will be intense
- This scenario offers higher potential return, but with higher potential risk

## Rural Preservation with Targeted Growth

### Opportunities

- Provides strategic direction for infrastructure investment and public policy decisions
- Reduces residential sprawl footprint
- Greatest protection for existing and expanding agriculture, rural character, open-space, and natural resources
- Working farms enhance possibility for growth of local food cluster
- Substantially reduces infrastructure and government services costs
- Reduces vehicle miles traveled and congestion in commuter corridors
- Greatly expands local quality job opportunities
- Brands the county as an entity promoting economic development
- Balances residential/commercial tax base and reduces retail sales tax leakage
- Encourages walkable mixed-use urban communities
- Increased tax base can provide improvement in the quality of public schools and the community college
- Local high paying jobs will provide opportunities for future generations to remain in Chatham County

### Challenges

- Need to balance competing strategies of preservation and growth
- Need to coordinate county and municipal planning efforts
- Need to assess local infrastructure capacity for regional demand
- Upfront capital costs are higher
- Need to proactively prepare for training of diversified workforce
- Competition for high end employment centers will be intense
- Offers higher potential return, but with higher potential risk

## SCENARIOS

### **Decentralized Growth**

#### Description

The decentralized growth scenario envisions how the County would grow if the dispersed pattern of development continues. New growth will take the form of single use, low-density development that is isolated and not well-connected. Common features of the scenario include green field development patterns, outward expansion of county water and development of private wastewater systems, and transportation investments that favor convenience for automobile users.

#### Primary Growth Drivers

Growth patterns and development intensities follow existing zoning ordinances, watershed protection ordinances, environmental health regulations in areas outside of towns, and subdivision regulations and ordinances administered by the towns.

### **Compact Centers and Growth Corridors**

#### Description

The compact centers and growth corridors scenario envisions how the County would develop if new growth is focused into compact, walkable communities with nearby opportunities to live, work, shop and be entertained. Development in each center could vary in scale, use and intensity, ranging from cross roads centers to neighborhood activity centers to employment centers to town centers.

#### Primary Growth Drivers

Growth patterns and development intensities follow the policies and plans for Compact Community Corridors as envisioned in the Land Conservation and Development Plan, for example, for well-planned mixes of homes, shops, offices, institutions and civic spaces along US 15-501 north of Pittsboro.

### **Conservation/Farmland Preservation**

#### Description

The conservation/farmland preservation scenario envisions how Chatham would grow if new growth is directed away from identified agricultural areas and from environmentally-sensitive lands and resources. Preservation of natural areas and cultural resources maximize the protection of natural conservation areas, water resources, and working farms.

#### Primary Growth Drivers

Development is generally directed away from environmentally-sensitive lands or cultural resources, including floodplains, natural heritage areas, resource protection areas, permanent conservation areas and working farms.

## **Targeted Employment**

### Description

The targeted employment scenario envisions how the County would develop if more employment was attracted. Development is generally directed into economic development areas within the towns and at the core of compact centers. One objective would be to reduce overall commuting distance for residents because of greater proximity to local employment opportunities. Benefits may include reductions in commute time and distance, reduced traffic congestion, and reduced air emissions.

### Primary Growth Drivers

The primary growth driver is the ability to expand existing water and sewer capacity and infrastructure. Development intensities follow subdivision regulations and ordinances administered by the towns and potentially new zoning ordinances and development standards in economic development areas within the county's jurisdiction.