



# **Village of Whispering Pines Land Use Plan**

**Recommended by Planning and Zoning Board 11/18/15  
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## **Our Vision**

The Village of Whispering Pines is a thriving community recognized for its high quality residential areas, recreational opportunities, environmental resources and natural beauty. The growth and development of the Village is well planned. It is designed to integrate with, and complement, existing development and infrastructure within the Village and the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) by protecting and promoting the traditional way of life in Whispering Pines as a desirable residential and recreational community.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of this Land Use Plan (LUP) and supporting Land Development Ordinance (LDO) is to provide a comprehensive process relating to the use and development of land within the Village of Whispering Pines and its ETJ by presenting a vision, goals, objectives, strategies and operational procedures to support, maintain and perpetuate a desirable residential and recreational way of life. This process is to be used by Village Council, Planning and Zoning Board, Village Staff and residents in making decisions relating to a wide variety of land development and use issues.

## **Our Values**

This Plan is guided by our vision but driven by our core values. These are the guiding principles that reflect the Village character, goals and objectives.

Simply stated, our core values are:

- Land use patterns that:
  - (a) respect and reinforce our low to moderate density
  - (b) provide a safe and tranquil quality of life
  - (c) develop a strong sense of community
- Environmental quality that nurtures and sustains our lakes and natural environment
- Active and passive recreational opportunities for all residents.
- Transportation networks that ensure efficient and safe travel for motor vehicles, golf carts, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- Sound utility systems that provide sufficient capacity for current and future residents.

# **Introduction**

## **Village History and Regional Context**

The Village of Whispering Pines was founded in 1959 as a recreational development centered around Thagard Lake. Shortly thereafter, the founder, A.B. Hardee, broadened his concept to include golf and additional lakes. This attracted retirees, largely from northern states. For the next 40 years or so, this was the pattern of development. New lakes were built, new sections were opened for residential construction and three 18-hole golf courses were constructed.

The Village was incorporated as a municipality by act of the North Carolina General Assembly in 1969. It is one of eleven incorporated municipalities in Moore County; which is located in the Sandhills region of Central North Carolina.

The character of the Village has remained unchanged since 1969. The primary goal has been to preserve the quiet, tranquil, and unusually attractive Village atmosphere. The Village has affirmed its role as a residential recreational community; as well as its objectives towards retaining and enhancing the quality of life for its residents and visitors now and in the future.

The Village is located less than ten miles from Pinehurst, one of the premier golfing destinations in the world. The edge of Fort Bragg is less than ten miles to the east of the Village. Fayetteville, the state's largest city in the south central region, is just thirty- five miles from the Village. Raleigh, the State Capital, is sixty- six miles to the north; and Charlotte, the largest city between Washington D.C. and Atlanta, is less than one hundred miles to the west.

## **The Village Character**

Whispering Pines is a quiet, peaceful community shaded by a canopy of stately pines and oaks. Essential to our character are eight beautiful lakes maintained by the Village: Thagard Lake, Spring Valley Lake, Pine Lake, Shadow Lake, Whisper Lake, Flyrod Lake, Cardinal Lake and Blue Lake. The lakes provide recreational opportunities, vital wildlife habitats, and perhaps most importantly, they define a sense of open space and spaciousness which makes Whispering Pines a beautiful village. Three golf courses located in the Village also provide recreational opportunities to their members and guests, and open space to the entire Village.

Most of the original residents of Whispering Pines were retirees relocating from other parts of the state and nation. By 1995 the Village had become attractive to some who are still in the workforce and young families. Most of the residential uses are single-family homes. There are some condominiums, apartments, governmental uses, and a few areas of non-residential development within the Village's zoning jurisdiction.

## **Village Plans**

The first Land Use Plan (Master Plan) of Whispering Pines was adopted in 1979, and reflected Village evolution over the preceding ten years. Revised and updated Land Use Plans were adopted in 1990 and 1995. The growth and development of the Village over the years has conformed to these plans. The LUP is subject to continuing review and is revised as conditions warrant. The last revision to the LUP was approved in 2001. In 2007, a proposed LUP was presented to the Council but not approved. Many provisions of the proposed LUP were incorporated into the LDO which was approved by the Village Council in November 2010. In July 2012, the Whispering Pines Recreation and Open Space Master Plan was approved by the Village Council.

## **Background**

Zoning districts have been established to control the use of land within the Village's jurisdiction. The designations and purposes of each zoning district are incorporated into the LDO. The boundaries of each district are shown on the map entitled Official Zoning Map, Village of Whispering Pines, North Carolina. This map is considered a part of the LDO and can only be changed through established map amendment procedures. By State regulations this map is on public display in the Village Hall.

Until 1981, by special agreement with Moore County, the Moore County Subdivision Regulations were utilized to regulate land subdivision within the Village as well as its ETJ. In April 1981, the Village adopted its own Subdivision Regulations which are now incorporated into the LDO and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

For zoning purposes, the Village was originally developed as subdivision land sections consisting primarily of single family residences, oriented to golf courses and lakes. The entire area was zoned either Residential Single Family or Recreational with the exception of three Office and Professional Zoning Districts and Rescue Squad areas. Effective October 1979, Section 9, the area south of Airport Road, was rezoned as Residential Multiple Unit Dwelling District (today known as Residential Multi-family) and a Recreational District.

## **Our Future**

### **1. The Plan**

Planning today can fuel success tomorrow. The LUP is designed to provide public officials, developers, land owners and residents the direction and information they need to understand and build towards our vision. It is a framework that the Village can rely on to continually guide planning efforts, but must also be dynamic and responsive to our rapidly changing world. It must be consistently used, frequently reviewed, and periodically updated to remain relevant and vital to our community. To that end, the Plan shall be reviewed at least once every three years.

2. Zoning Districts Within the Village:

Zoning changes should be consistent with maintaining the Village in its present development pattern. New subdivisions should be zoned primarily RS or RA with density as the major consideration.

3. Zoning within the ETJ:

A large portion of undeveloped land in the ETJ is zoned RA (Residential Agricultural) and should be preserved. Rezoning in this area should be limited to low density development.

4. Annexation

Voluntary annexations should be considered only if mutually advantageous to the Village and to the Property owners.

## **Plan Categories**

This LUP is separated into the following categories:

1. Land Use and Design
2. Environmental Quality
3. Open Space
4. Transportation
5. Utilities
6. Intergovernmental Coordination and Cooperation

## **Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

### **1. Land Use and Design**

**Goal: To preserve the quiet, tranquil, and uniquely attractive Village atmosphere by closely monitoring land use and development.**

Our vision for the future of the Village and its ETJ is for this area to remain a quiet, tranquil, and uniquely attractive Village. Those activities and land uses not compatible with this goal, such as non-residential areas, must be highly regulated. Increasing the tax base should be a lesser goal of the Village in making land use decisions. Any decision to rezone property should be based on conformity with this Land Use Plan.

When compared to other areas of Moore County and the State, the Village has experienced significant growth in recent years. The Village should continue to carefully plan and direct future land use. Building orientation on the lot, building size and height, the relationship to nearby buildings and/or public spaces, signage and lighting should be closely monitored and regulated. The LDO currently addresses these items. The aesthetic appeal or visual harmony should be considered as important as the actual land use.

One of the defining features of Whispering Pines is its open space. Open space can be defined as land or water resources, that when preserved, would 1) conserve and enhance natural or scenic resources; 2) protect streams or water supply; 3) promote conservation of soils or wetlands; 4) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations, and/or sanctuaries; and/or 5) enhance recreation opportunities.

**Objective:** Maintain the LDO to clarify procedural requirements, to ensure due process and to monitor the impacts of future land use.

Strategy 1-1 As necessary, review and modify the list of permitted uses and dimensional requirements in all zoning district to better achieve the stated intent and objectives of the zoning ordinance and protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and to maintain property values.

Strategy 1-2 Review and modify applications and permits to ensure detailed information is requested to allow effective and time efficient review and implementation.

Strategy 1-3 Limit non-residential development ensuring no infringement into residential areas.

Strategy 1-4 Utilize the amount of space allocated under the 5/70 rule for non-residential and municipal use only.

## **2. Environmental Quality**

**Goal: To protect and enhance the quality and beauty of the natural environment.**

Located in the gently rolling Sandhills Region of North Carolina, Whispering Pines is blessed with wonderful natural resources. Eight beautiful lakes, a widespread tree canopy, a variety of ecosystems, abundant wildlife, and a moderate climate suitable for outdoor activities year round define much of our physical world.

Most areas of the Whispering Pines Jurisdiction are classified by the State as “WS-III, B, HQW.” A “WS-III” watershed is a low to moderately developed drinking water supply watershed. “B” is a designation given to recreational water where body contact is expected. “HQW” means High Quality Waters which, for Whispering Pines, means Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) that have been designated to “protect unique and special waters having excellent water quality, and being of exceptional state or national ecological or recreational significance.”

Since many pollutants and environmental degradation come from developing and developed areas, a strong regulatory program is necessary to ensure that land and water quality are protected for future

generations. The State has many such programs, but coordination, cooperation, and sometimes augmentation at the local level is necessary to ensure that resources are adequately protected. In an effort to ensure the highest level of land and water quality protection, the Village established its own Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control program as part of the LDO.

**Objective:** Strengthen and expand the Village’s watershed protection efforts

Strategy 2-1 Maintain a low to moderate density land use pattern within the Village and ETJ

Strategy 2-2 Limit land use adjacent to significant wetlands and prohibit the filling of wetlands

### **3. Open Space**

**Goal: To expand the amount of land for open space / recreation space available to all residents of the Village.**

**Objective: An important quality of life factor for cities and towns is to maintain a strong sense of community. Community creates social capital which can be defined as the connectedness and formation of social networks.**

Strategy 3-1 Develop and maintain provisions within the LDO that encourages the achievement of this goal.

Strategy 3-2 Review and update Recreation and Open Space Master Plan every three years

Strategy 3-3 Develop a phased plan for a centralized park of at least twenty acres.

Strategy 3-4 Develop a centralized meeting and recreational facility for the Village.

### **4. Transportation**

**Goal: To maintain and improve the quality and function of Village streets.**

The current preference for transportation in the Village is for our streets to serve multiple uses such as motorized vehicle traffic, walking and cycling. The State has established minimum standards for the construction and maintenance of state-maintained roadways. Many municipalities including Whispering Pines use these standards to govern the construction and maintenance of local streets as well.

**Objective:** Provide a quality street system.

Strategy 4-1 Review and update the Whispering Pines Street Condition Survey every three years

Strategy 4-2 Implement the recommendations of the Street Condition Survey

## **5. Utilities**

**Goal:** Monitor the provision of utilities to Village residents and property owners.

**Objective:** Ensure high quality utility service for all residents

**Strategy 5-1** Communicate with utility providers as necessary

**Strategy 5-2** Continue to provide educational information regarding the use and maintenance of septic systems

## **6. Intergovernmental Coordination & Cooperation**

**Goal:** To maintain open and regular communications with other entities who can impact the residents of Whispering Pines.

**Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation are essential to achieving the best possible future for the Village of Whispering Pines.**

**Objective:** Maintain regular communication with neighboring jurisdictions.

**Strategy 6-1** Appoint Village staff and/or Council members to attend and report on regular meetings of entities impacting Whispering Pines

**Strategy 6-2** Maintain a relationship with county and state representatives to ensure knowledge of pending action having a possible impact on Whispering Pines