



Village of Forest Hills

Work Session

May 5, 2026

7:00 PM

1. WCU Electric Update – Mr. Reid Conway, Director Energy and Utilities
2. Summer Social date selection
 - a. Who is taking lead
3. Planning Consultant
 - a. Why update?
 - b. Budget impact
 - c. All going to need to assist, recruit volunteers
 - d. WATR study
4. Planning board vacancy
5. Board member replacement
 - a. Verify Process
6. Website update -live
 - a. Continue to update
7. Fund balance policy – no update, long range need to do formal review
8. Calendar – again what should Village boards track on an internal calendar, please get items to Stephanie.
9. Adjourn



PlanNC Framework Implementation for Forest Hills, NC

Streamlined Seven-Step Planning Process for Small Communities

A comprehensive implementation strategy for Chapter 160D compliance designed specifically for villages with limited planning staff and resources, providing Forest Hills with an efficient pathway to develop impactful community plans.

Why Forest Hills Needs a Future Land Use Plan



Legal Compliance

Chapter 160D requires all NC towns to have reasonably up-to-date plans to enforce zoning, effective July 1, 2022.



Strategic Benefits

Proactive planning enables informed decision-making and positions Forest Hills for sustainable growth and development opportunities.



Resource Optimization

PlanNC's streamlined approach maximizes impact while working within Forest Hills' limited staffing and budget constraints.



Community Vision

Establishes clear long-term development guidance that reflects community values and priorities for Forest Hills' future.

Forest Hills Planning Context

Current Municipal Structure

- Governance:** 5-member Town Council and 5-member Planning Board provide local oversight and decision-making authority.
- Resources:** Village operates without full-time planning staff, requiring streamlined planning approaches.
- Location:** Strategic position near Cullowhee and Western Carolina University provides growth opportunities.
- Community:** Active participation potential with established municipal infrastructure and meeting facilities.

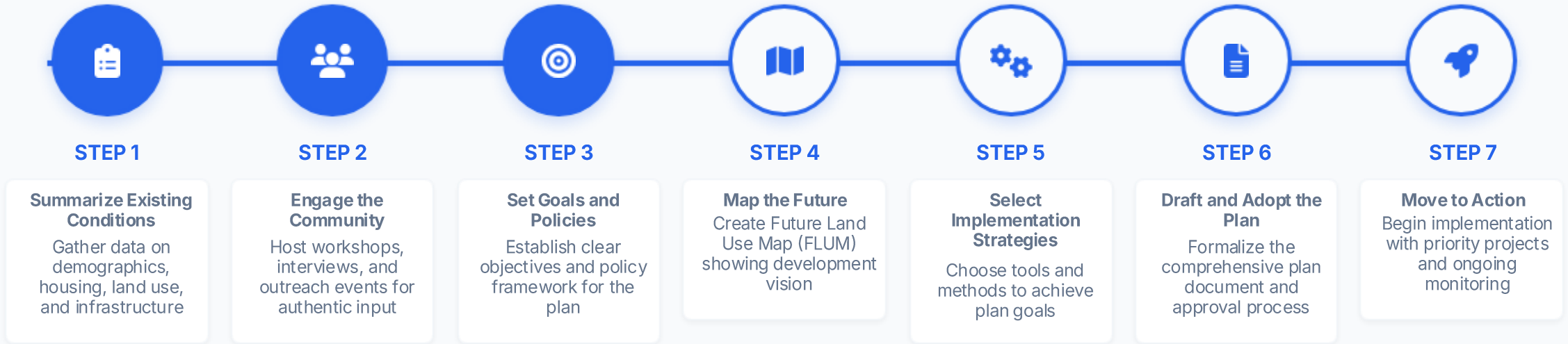
Address: P.O Box 506 Cullowhee, NC 28723

Assembly Hall: 97 Market Street, Unit 101



The PlanNC Seven-Step Framework

Streamlined & Efficient



FRAMEWORK BENEFITS

Designed for efficiency while maintaining meaningful community engagement and professional standards

Sequential Process

Milestone-Based Implementation

Step 1: Summarize Existing Conditions

Data Gathering & Analysis Phase

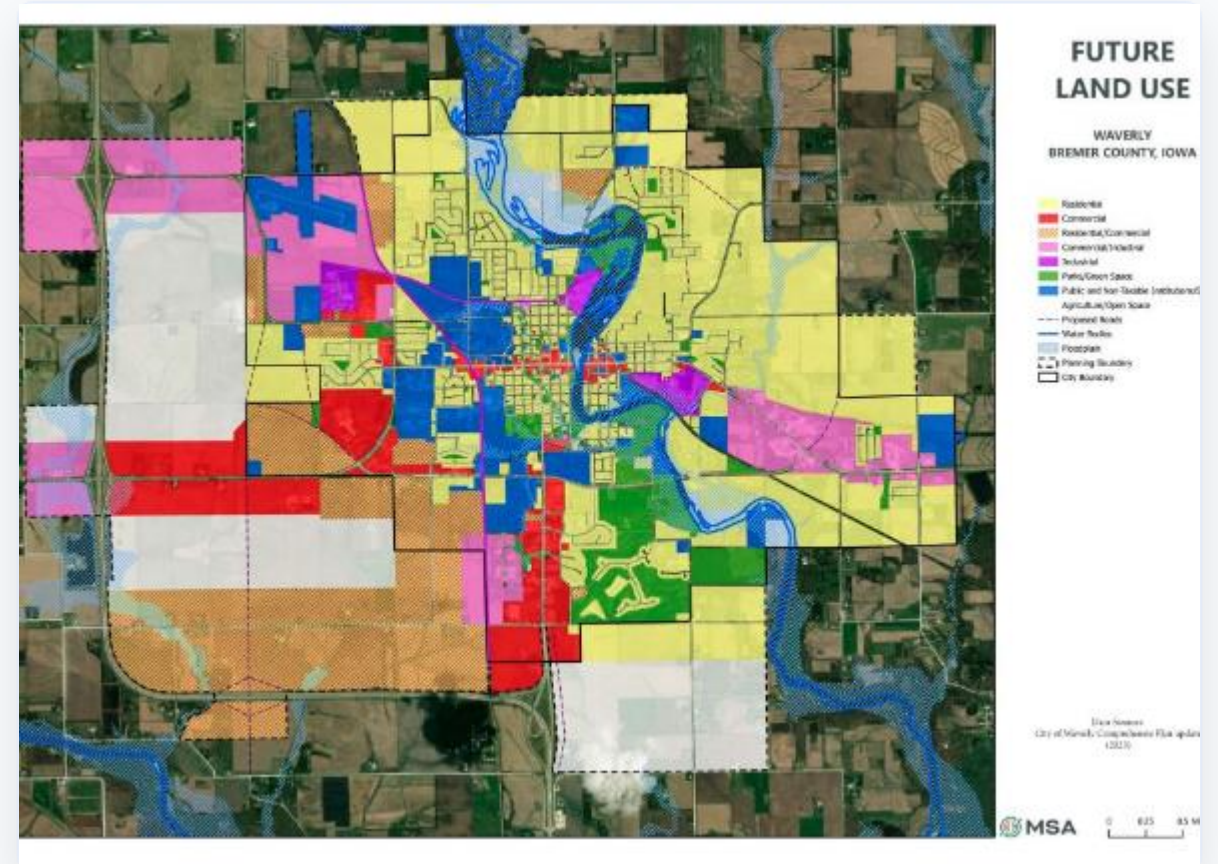
Data Collection: Gather demographics, housing, land use, infrastructure, services, natural resources, and current zoning information.

Volunteer Coordination: Council, planning board, and volunteers divide tasks efficiently to maximize community involvement.

Template Usage: Utilize Template 1A/1B approaches from PlanNC Guidebook for systematic data collection.

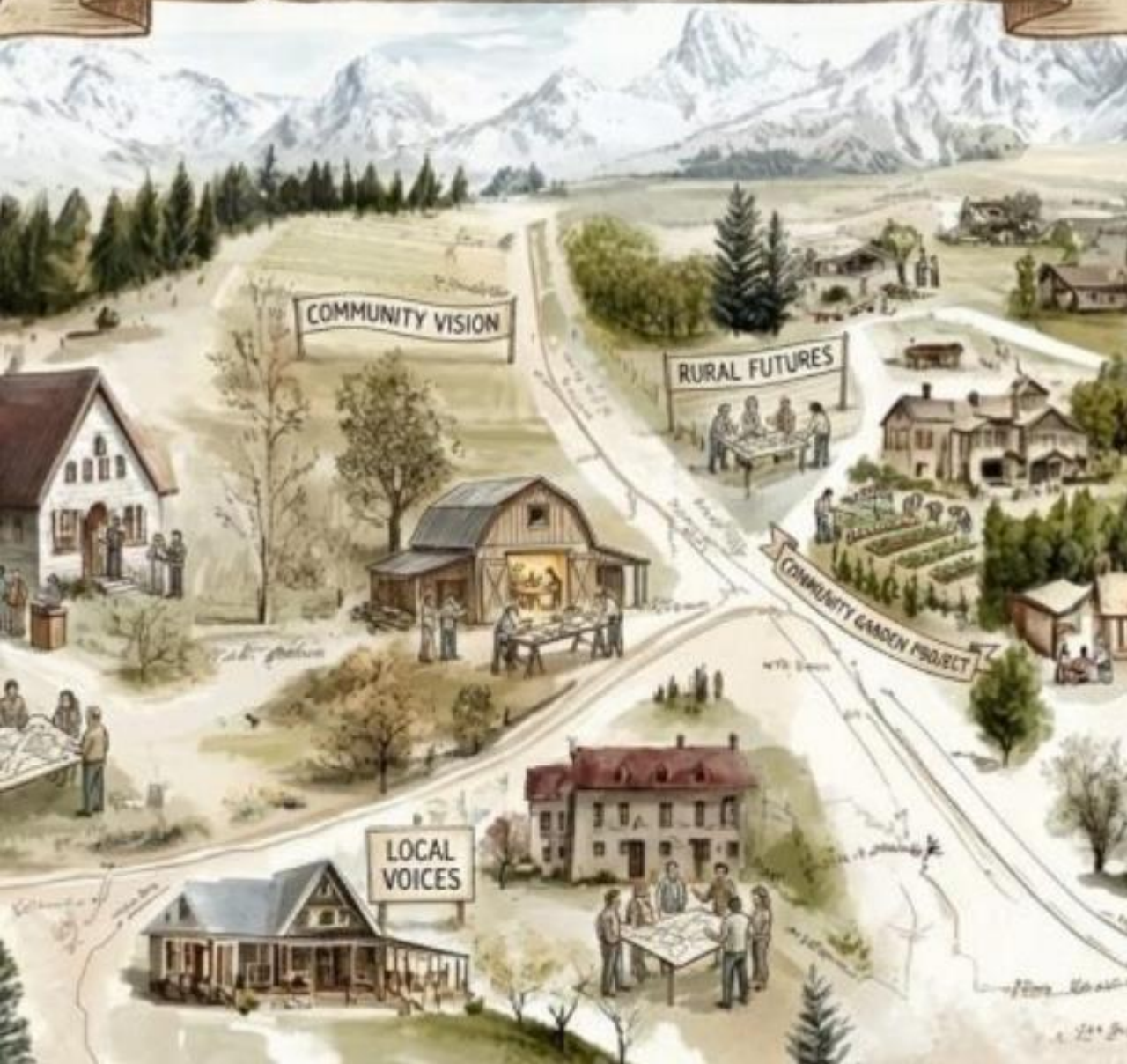
Documentation: Deliverables include existing conditions data worksheet and concise summary for planning foundation.

Time Investment: Estimated 20-40 volunteer hours for comprehensive data gathering and synthesis.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

in SMALL TOWN & RURAL PLANNING



Step 2: Engage the Community

Build authentic community input through multiple engagement channels and volunteer-led coordination efforts.

Multiple Outreach Channels

Workshops, open houses, and community forums to gather diverse perspectives

Volunteer-Led Coordination

Council, planning board, and volunteers host small public engagement events

Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one conversations with key community leaders and residents

Digital Outreach

Online surveys and social media engagement to reach broader audience

RESOURCE PLANNING

Recommended 2-4 public engagement events with an estimated 20-40 volunteer hours for planning and conducting activities.

Step 3: Set Goals and Policies

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"Effective policy development requires synthesizing diverse community voices into a coherent framework that reflects shared values while providing clear guidance for future land use decisions."

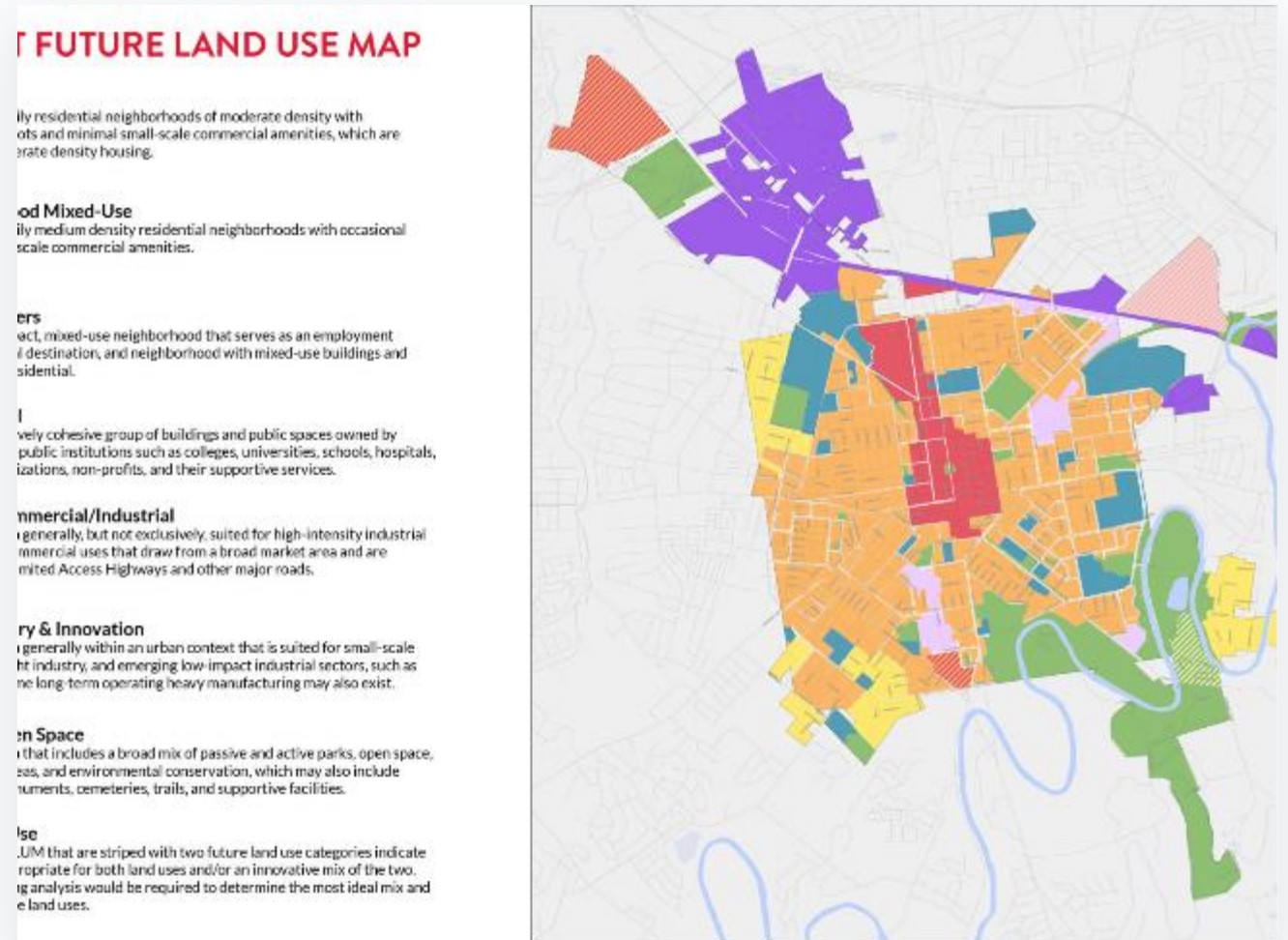
Dr. Sarah Mitchell

Municipal Planning Consultant, UNC School of Government

Step 4: Map the Future (FLUM Creation)

Critical FLUM Development Phase

- Translate goals and policies into a comprehensive **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)** with supporting category descriptions and rationale.
- Timeline spans **4-9 weeks** depending on analysis complexity and availability of professional mapping expertise.
- Technical mapping requirements include FLUM creation, land use category tables, descriptions, and potential scenario analyses.
- Estimated **40-80 volunteer hours** working collaboratively with consultant on FLUM concepts and public explanations.



Steps 5-7: Implementation Through Adoption

Final Implementation Steps

05 Select Implementation Strategies

Identify and evaluate tools, ordinances, capital projects, funding sources, and partnerships needed to achieve plan goals.

06 Draft and Adopt the Plan

Prepare comprehensive draft document and present to planning board and town council for formal adoption.

07 Move to Action

Develop implementation timeline, establish monitoring systems, and align with municipal budget cycle for execution.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



Resource Requirements and Budget

\$20,000

Consultant Investment
for technical expertise



150-300

Total Volunteer Hours
across seven steps

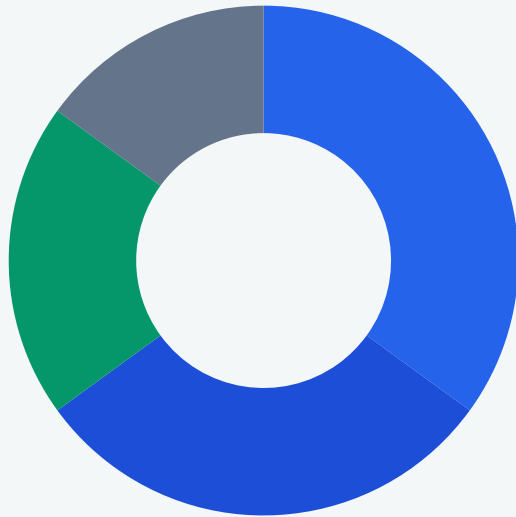


\$3,750-\$12,000

Volunteer Time Value
at community rates



Consultant Budget Allocation

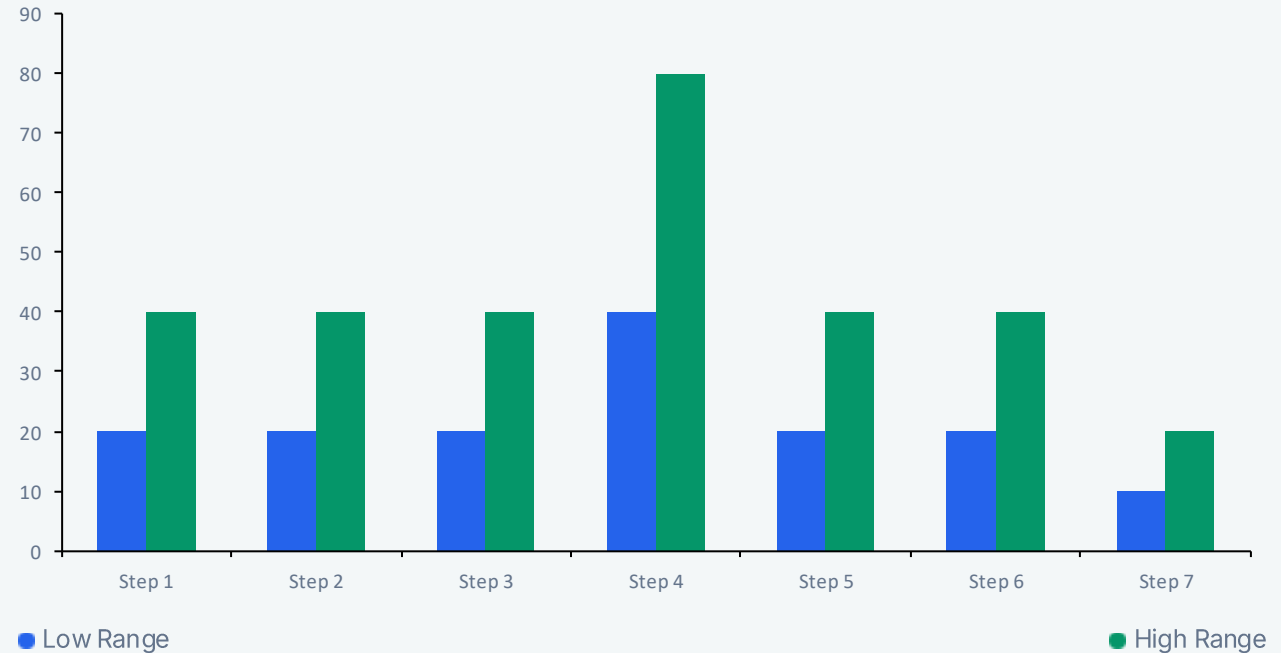


■ FLUM Mapping ■ Policy Drafting ■ Compliance Review ■ Engagement Materials

Technical tasks requiring specialized expertise

Volunteer Hour Distribution by Planning Step

Time Commitment



Key Deliverables Overview



Existing Conditions Summary

Comprehensive data worksheet and narrative documenting current land use patterns and development conditions



Community Engagement Summary

Documentation of outreach approach, public input sessions, and community feedback throughout the process



Goals & Policy Framework

Draft goals, objectives, and policy recommendations aligned with Forest Hills' vision and priorities



Future Land Use Map

FLUM with detailed categories, definitions, and geographic boundaries for future development guidance



Implementation Action Plan

Prioritized actions with responsible parties, timing, and resources needed for plan execution






Draft Plan + Adoption Package

Complete planning document, public hearing materials, and final adoption-ready version

Governance and Leadership Structure


Recommended organizational framework for volunteer-driven planning process

Leadership Roles

-  **Plan Lead:** Council or planning board member to coordinate all steps and liaison with consultant
-  **Engagement Team:** Volunteer group for data gathering, public input, and community outreach
-  **Technical Lead:** GIS-savvy volunteer or consultant for FLUM development and mapping analysis

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Meeting Structure

-  **Regular Sessions:** 60-90 minute evening meetings to maintain momentum and coordination
-  **Meeting Cadence:** Monthly or biweekly schedule based on volunteer availability and project phase
-  **Joint Sessions:** Combined meetings for Steps 2-4 to maximize public input and ensure alignment

Timeline and Next Steps

Immediate Decisions Required

01 Planning Horizon

Confirm preferred planning timeframe: 10-year focused plan or comprehensive 20-year vision.

02 Technical Scope

Determine level of mapping detail and scenario analysis needed for community planning process.

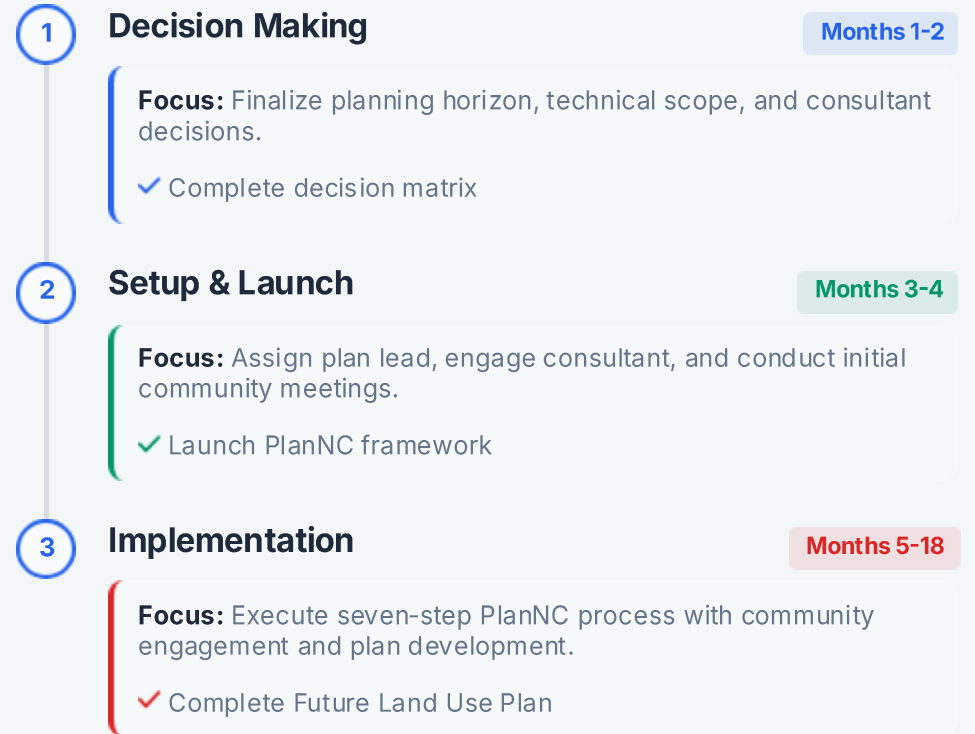
03 Consultant Engagement

Decide on engaging planning consultant for technical support (~\$20,000 scope estimate).

04 Workplan Development

Finalize detailed workplan, assign dedicated plan lead, and schedule initial kickoff meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP



— Call to Action —

"Forest Hills can leverage the PlanNC framework to create an **impactful community plan** with limited resources."



Framework Benefits

Structured 7-step process provides clear guidance while maintaining flexibility for local capacity and resources.



Success Factors

Dedicated leadership assignment and authentic community engagement are essential for meaningful planning outcomes.



Implementation Readiness

Consultant support for technical work and integration with municipal budget cycles ensure sustainable progress.



Real People. Real Solutions.

Forest Hills Planning Services Scope **DRAFT**

April 21, 2026

Phase 1: Project Initiation and Conceptual Design

Task 1.1: Kickoff Meeting, Data Collection, and Basemaps

The Consultant will meet with Village staff and discuss the scope, schedule, and roles. Previous plans, ordinances, and GIS data will be collected from the Village, Jackson County, and other relevant sources. Basemaps of the Village will be produced that highlight property ownership, infrastructure and natural resources.

Task 1.2: Plan and Ordinance Review

The Consultant will review existing plans, policies, and ordinances adopted by the Village, Jackson County, and other relevant organizations. A summary of these plans and ordinances will be included in the Land Use Plan developed in Phase 2.

Task 1.3: Concept Development Designs

The Consultant will conduct an internal worksession and research issues and opportunities in the Village of Forest Hills. Two conceptual plans will be created to illustrate potential development of the former golf course property in the Forest Hills valley. These options could illustrate a “by-right” alternative with relatively large lots and a “conservation design” option that attempts to cluster development away from viewsheds and sensitive environmental areas. These two options could be evaluated in tandem with the development plans recently proposed. Sketches will be accompanied by a narrative, precedent imagery, and performance metrics including number of housing units and amount of preserved open space.

Phase 1 Partners for Green Growth Tasks: If grant application is successful a portion of fee from Phase 1 could be reimbursed for creating maps of natural resources and development of conceptual designs.

Optional Task (Potentially Use PGG Funds): Refined concept plan renders for use in the Land Use Plan document after public engagement efforts.

Task 1.4: Site Photos (Client Led)

This task will be client led. Photos will be taken of existing land uses, buildings, infrastructure, and natural resources in the study area for use during the planning process.

Phase 2: Land Use Plan Update

Task 2.1 Stakeholder Meetings

Small group discussions will be facilitated with stakeholders including residents, business and property owners, county staff, and representatives from other organizations. These meetings will be held over the course of 1-2 days and some may be virtual.

Task 2.2: Community Survey and Visioning Workshop

A community survey will be developed and made available in digital and print format. The survey will gather feedback from the public on community values, priorities, and preferences. The Consultant will

develop advertisement materials to be utilized by the Village in the distribution of the survey. Results of the survey will be summarized and utilized to inform plan recommendations.

A public workshop with boards and members of the public will be facilitated to gather feedback on a preferred land use pattern in undeveloped areas of the Village as well as understand assets and priorities relative to viewsheds, environmental features, and community goals. Additional exercises will allow citizens to evaluate existing goals and recommendations in Forest Hills Land Use Plan. This task will set the direction for an update to the land use plan and future targeted zoning amendments.

Client Responsibilities for Task 2.2.

- Assist with survey distribution (i.e. pack, stamp and ship mailers, door to door conversations or curbside tent on Country Club Drive)
- Arrange meeting location
- Assist with staffing workshop including volunteers for sign in table, etc.

Task 2.3: Plan Development

Input from Task 2.1 and 2.2 will be used to update the Land Use Plan. The new Land Use Plan will include updated goals and recommendations that leverage regional best practices and address community priorities. A new land use map will be developed and accompanied by character area descriptions, precedent imagery, and other graphics developed during the conceptual design phase. It is anticipated that land use plan recommendations will include more specific policies related to natural resources protection, housing, street and pedestrian connectivity, and open space design.

Client Responsibilities for Task 2.3.

- Provide text for inclusion into the Land Use Plan report including a history of village, summary of issues, summary of recent accomplishments.
- Facilitate a meeting to discuss board priorities and long-term goals for the LUP.

Phase 3: Adoption and Zoning Priorities Memo

Task 3.1: Adoption Support

The Consultant will provide agenda items for Planning Board and Village Council Meetings. Revisions to the draft Land Use Plan will be made following public and board review.

Task 3.2: Land Use Plan Adoption Meetings (Client Led)

Village representatives will lead Land Use Plan adoption meetings and catalogue comments made by board members and members of the public.

Optional Task (Potentially Use PGG Funds): If the Village is successful in receiving PGG Funds the Consultant may be able to utilize a portion of those funds for in-person meeting attendance related to the adoption of the Land Use Plan.

Task 3.2: Priority Zoning Amendments Memo

Based on input received strategic updates will be recommended for the Forest Hills Zoning Ordinance in the form of a technical memo. Recommended updates may include revisions to the Mixed Use District in order to facilitate the preferred development pattern in the valley and/or amendments that clarify site specific requirements related to allowable uses, dimensional requirements, street and pedestrian connectivity, or open space design.

Fee Estimate

Phase	Description	Fee	Potential Use of PGG Funds
Phase 1	Project Initiation and Concept Design	\$15,000	\$5,000 – 7,500
Phase 2	Land Use Plan Update	\$25,000	\$5,000
Phase 3	Adoption and Zoning Priorities Memo	\$8,000	\$0 - 7,500
Total		\$50,000	\$10,000 – 20,000

Optional Tasks

These optional services could be combined with any of the planning services above.

Optional Task Number	Description	Fee	Potential Use of PGG Funds
A	Virtual Board Meetings: Preparation, virtual attendance, and presentation at a Village board meeting.	\$600	N/A
B	In-person Board Meetings: Preparation, in-person attendance, and presentation at a Village board meeting. <i>Includes expenses.</i>	\$2,000	Potentially for meeting attendance related to the LUP Adoption
C	Additional Public Meeting: Preparation of materials, attendance of two people, facilitation, and summary of a public meeting.	\$5,000	N/A
D	Refined Conceptual Plan Rendering: Refined concept plan renders for use in the Land Use Plan document after public engagement efforts.	\$2,500	\$2,500
E	Zoning Amendments: Ordinance edits and additional meeting attendance following the Priority Zoning Amendments Memo. An update of key chapters of the zoning ordinance will be drafted to account for state legislation, emerging issues and local priorities. Coordination with the Planning Board and/or Village Council will be necessary to complete this task.	Varies*	Potentially for meeting attendance
F	On-Call Planning Services: On-call planning services support that could include mapping, analysis, code updates, development review,	Hourly with a not to exceed monthly amount (i.e. up	N/A

	concept design, graphics, or other related work.	to \$4,000 per month for x months)	
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**Exact cost depends on exact scope including number of meetings and deliverables to be determined through additional discussion and coordination with Village officials.*

DRAFT NOT FOR SIGNATURE