

## **Agenda Item: Public Hearing on Motion 2014-7, Family Entertainment District Small Area Plan**

**DATE:** Nov 3, 2014  
**FROM:** Kathi Ingrish

### **Background/Issue:**

This proposed small area plan covers the regional Sportsplex and adjacent privately owned land projected to be developed as a new mixed use urban scale neighborhood. A new zoning category – ENT -- created specifically for this geographic area can be applied within the area as soon as a general concept plan, or small area plan, is adopted as an appendix to the Matthews Land Use Plan. Much of the draft small area plan is the same as previous Town visioning efforts over the past decade. This draft plan does not specify what uses must be placed at what points within the overall development area, nor does it give a completed street network. Rather, it provides the backbone street system, outlines the variety of uses that may take place within the new neighborhood, and recommends architectural and thematic elements be coordinated for a cohesive new neighborhood. The area is expected to be built out over time, not as a single mass project.

The ENT zoning district provides a set of design standards for site layout and for individual buildings, which will complement any architectural themes and street furnishings that may be chosen to “brand” the district.

### **Proposal/Solution:**

The draft small area plan is ready for public review and discussion. It was posted to the Town’s webpage prior to the public input session in September, and revised the first week of October to incorporate suggestions made at that session.

### **Financial Impact:**

Adopting the small area plan has no financial impact of itself, however, it will allow new development proposals to come in for zoning and site plan approvals within the new district which will have a dramatic benefit to the Town’s long-term financial well-being.

### **Related Town Goal(s) and/or Strategies:**

Quality of Life

Economic Development/Land Use Planning

### **Recommended Motion/Action:**

Listen to comments as may be offered on any further changes to the draft small area plan, make suggestions you determine are necessary, and send the draft to Planning Board for their input. This will allow the draft small area plan to be returned to Town Board for possible adoption at the Dec 8, 2014 meeting.

Requests for zoning change into the ENT district may be accepted at any time following adoption of the small area plan. Such requests may be for “Early Designation” which would change the zoning classification and require subsequent submittal of site plans and elevation drawings when they are ready to move forward.

*There are related policies Town Board may wish to discuss and adopt separately, but at about the same time as adoption of the small area plan. These do not need to be part of the small area plan itself, so that they can be updated as needed, more quickly than the formal process required of a document within the Land Use Plan. These policies and preferences may include:*

*\*\* establishing a maximum size for a single establishment “big box”;*

*Suggested format at the end of the Land Use section of the small area plan: “To prevent big box retail*

*(merchandise sales as sole or primary activity) from locating here, Town Board may choose to adopt a policy that no single retail establishment should be greater than 70,000 square feet.*

*\*\* maximum build-out of any one type of land use until other land uses are at a certain build-out, in order to guarantee the development is a mix of uses at all stages and become a full-service neighborhood;*

*Suggested examples of policies at the end of the Land Use section of the small area plan include: No more than 600 dwelling units should receive building permits for construction until at least 40,000 square feet of commercial is under construction or completed. This “commercial” allocation should include an assortment of small shops, restaurants, services, and employment sites, rather than a single business, so that the loss of one establishment will not create a significant/total loss of commercial activity. Similarly, no more than 120,000 square feet of commercial should receive building permits until at least 240 dwelling units are under construction.*

*\*\* whether to pursue any public-private partnership, a synthetic TIF process, or other shared funding scenario to facilitate the upfront construction of some public improvements, particularly streets, main utility extensions, and storm water impoundments and related features;*

*This discussion may be initiated by Town Board in order to allow the greatest deviation from undeveloped vacant land to urban mixed use development for largest tax value increases if a TIF-type funding option is desired. Alternately, this discussion may be initiated by one or more private developers at the time they offer specific development plans for a substantial portion of the future neighborhood, should they wish to craft a public-private partnership.*

*\*\* identifying specific thematic elements to be repetitively used for architecture or public realm amenities (i.e., roof styles, street light poles, benches and trash/recycling cans, etc.);*

*The Strategies section of the draft plan identify a wide variety of street furnishings and amenities, but stop short of specifying one particular brand, color, option, etc. Town Board may wish to add preferred or required items.*

*\*\* establishing a policy for oversight of public art so that it meets “community” standards for decency yet allows artistic license;*

*The Urban Design section of the small area plan states public art should meet local standards of decency “given the expectation that families with children will populate the public realm . . . while enjoying the recreational activities or participating in sporting events”.*

*\*\* establishing a name or logo to “brand” the neighborhood;*

*As mentioned in the Strategies section of the draft plan, this would ideally be created with input from all stakeholders.*

*\*\* breakpoints for when surface parking lots can be redeveloped for greater density uses in exchange for structured shared parking, often off-site;*

*The Strategies section of the draft plan would anticipate sites be identified as future parking conversion locations. Using the 2007 concept build-out plan, one location is beside the Sportsplex stadium on the privately-owned land adjacent to the Sportsplex connector street, and one location is on Independence Point Parkway near its intersection with the north-south primary street across from the future transit station. The Strategies section then offers various triggers for surface to structured parking, as follows:*

*1) When CATS approves extension of a mass transit mode other than local or express bus to the proposed transit station location;*

*2) When Mecklenburg County approves an ongoing joint-use agreement for at least 200 parking spaces within a structured parking facility for stadium use;*

*3) When at least 400,000 sq ft of nonresidential development, at least 500 dwelling units, or a mix of residential overnight lodging, and/or nonresidential uses totaling at least 500,000 sq ft have permits issued for construction.*