

City of Watauga  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
Responses to Public Comments

**Comment 1:** "I love Watauga 😊"

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**Thank you for your support and enthusiasm for the City, and its strategic planning for the future.**

**Comment 2:** "This is just to encourage people to fill out a card – don't want an empty box."

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**Thank you for your encouragement of fellow residents, and for your desire to see additional input submitted to the City**

**Comment 3A:** "Remove the "Multifamily Residential" component entirely for the Retail Transitional Mixed Use" land plan entirely. Watauga is primarily a single-family town and has been a top zip code destination because of its existing single-family residential base. Anytime you bring multifamily into an area, it brings a more transient population and can totally change an entire character of a neighborhood. The citizens of Watauga have spoken that they do NOT want any multifamily residential in the area."

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**All new development in the Retail Transitional Mixed Use ("RTMU") requires that the developer create and present a Master Development Plan ("MDP") that will be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. The MDP submittal must contain a detailed site plan, elevations, lighting plan, landscape plan, traffic plan, land uses and lot size. The City Council retains the authority to reject any and/or all elements of the MDP or request a modification. The MDP is designed to give the City Council maximum flexibility and authority to see that the plan is in keeping with the values of Watauga. Limited residential uses are important in any mixed use development. Residential paves the way for quality businesses such as restaurants, retail, and office. The residential uses, however, are subject to review and approval of the City Council as a part of the MDP review and therefore can be rejected or modified to meet the City's desires. In addition, garden style residential apartments are prohibited in the RTMU area. To keep residential uses in a healthy balance with commercial and retail uses, the buildout of the area is capped at 30% residential. The RTMU Comprehensive Plan designation does NOT grant any kind of residential use by right, nor does this change constitute re-zoning of the property. Each master development plan will have to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council for consideration and may be approved, rejected or amended. Additionally, 15% of the RTMU area must remain open space.**

**The design standards for the RTMU designation dictate high-quality development standards. As an example, traditional garden style apartments are specifically prohibited in the RTMU area. The high level of requirements for prospective development will result in properties that will attract higher income tenants and produce improved property values which will be necessary to support City services in light of lost revenues from shuttered retail.**

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**Comment 3B:** If the “Multifamily Residential” use component is not removed entirely, change all of the “Retail Transitional Mixed Use” land plan use from Hightower north to North Tarrant Parkway to “Regional Retail Commercial”. This stretch of 377 is a high sales tax revenue generator for the City of Watauga. Concerned about the “multifamily component” in the proposed “Retail Transitional Mixed-Use” land use north of Lifestyle Christianity and the fact that the reduced area of “Public/Semi-Public” use could be detrimental to Capp Smith Park.

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**All existing retail and any future retail will continue operating without interruption. This plan is designed to provide a healthy and financially sustainable replacement for current retail big boxes and strip centers should those businesses close due to the changing retail market. Unfortunately, this is occurring in many communities all over the country leaving significant financial losses to cities that push more of the cost burden to residential taxpayers. This plan is designed to help Watauga avoid that eventuality. The RTMU designation is an economic development strategy crafted to help the City respond to the rapidly shifting retail market and replace revenues currently produced by the big box retail stores so that residential property taxes will not have to be raised to replace the big box retail sales tax revenues in order to maintain the current level of city services.**

**Comment 3C:** On the rectangle “Retail Transitional Mixed-Use” zoned landlocked parcel between Capp Smith Park and Lifestyle Christianity should be zoned either Public/Semi-Public or Parks and Open Space. Any mixed use development would have to have access through one of those properties, and the property would likely be developed with multifamily. The citizens of Watauga have spoken that they do NOT want any multifamily residential in the area, and don’t want to see any housing associated with Lifestyle Christianity in the area.

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**Any potential development at this location will be at the discretion of the City Council to accept or reject. No rezoning is occurring with this Comprehensive Plan amendment. Zoning requests will only occur as landowners request redevelopment of existing parcels to new land uses. The RTMU Comprehensive Plan designation simply allows more flexibility for the City to react to changes in this area in a manner that fits the redevelopment goals of the City, if retail stores begin to close. As previously mentioned, the traditional garden style apartment that causes so much consternation is prohibited in the RTMU. The residential component will be a higher density than single family residential, but it will be required to develop according to design and finish standards that will require higher income tenants and thus, higher quality commercial and retail development.**

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**Comment 3D:** The “Local Office/Retail /Commercial” zone along Watauga Road should be expanded north and south to the next streets in order to give those properties secondary rear access rather than just from Watauga Road. With the railroad tracks, traffic frequently backs up in this area making access difficult. In addition, the deeper lots could allow for deceleration lanes along Watauga Road to accommodate certain development.”

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**The Local Office/Retail/Commercial land use designation of this area was unchanged on the Future Land Use Plan in order to protect the integrity of current residential housing and prevent traffic on residential streets.**

**Comment 4A:** One page 2, a permitted use of the land along 377 is “attached single-family townhomes”. On Page 3, one of the prohibited uses is “garden style apartments”. What exactly is a “Garden style apartment”? I want to understand how it is different from an attached townhome.

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**Attached single family townhomes are attached buildings with very little setback that are built and intended for single family occupancy on smaller lots with high value. These will likely be owner occupied units that are significantly higher cost. Garden style apartments are apartment complexes that have multiple buildings, typically two or three story, with open space and parking between buildings. All of the apartments in Watauga today are garden style apartments. These are prohibited in the RTMU area. Below is a visual example of the difference between Attached Townhomes and garden style apartments**

**Attached Townhomes:**



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**Garden Style Apartments:**



**Garden style apartments are not in keeping with the vision of the City and as such are listed as a prohibited use. Attached townhomes are a development option that would diversify Watauga’s housing options, while maintaining the high development standards of the RTMU and the City.**

**Comment 4B:** Also, on page 2, a permitted use of the land is “two and three family housing”. What, exactly, is “two and three family housing”?

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**Two and three family housing is often referred to as duplex or triplex housing. These are residential buildings intended to house either two or three families. As with attached townhomes, this allows for a denser housing option, while maintaining high quality development in the RTMU and the City.**



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**Comment 4C:** I don't see under permitted uses or prohibited uses – churches. Are those permitted or prohibited?

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**Federal law prohibits cities from discriminating against churches by land use designation. Churches are not affected by the Comprehensive Plan Update.**

**Comment 4D:** What are some actual examples of retail you envision along 377 15 years from now? 30 years from now?

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**The projected future of the 377 Corridor includes an assortment of smaller stores, restaurants and businesses that are connected with sidewalks and walking trails. The areas would be family oriented and would significantly reduce the interaction between citizens and high traffic zones.**

**Comment 4E:** How much did I pay you, Pacheco Koch, to formulate this Plan?

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**The City's contract is with Petty & Associates Inc, for a not to exceed cost of \$30,000. Pacheco Koch is included in that price and is subcontracted under Petty & Associates.**

**Comment 5:** I fully support the Comp Plan update and having been in the work-group that helped create it, I would be more than happy to be available to promote it from a fellow citizen's perspective. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the group and the staff on this plan and hope the people and board can support it.

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**Thank you for your time and effort in helping to shape the Comprehensive Plan Update.**

**Comment 6A:** What about RT-MU for the Rufe Snow corridor? Why were none of the Rufe Snow corridor properties included as a "Retail Transitional Mixed-Use" future land use. With Rufe Snow construction completed and traffic shifting back with higher traffic counts, the Rufe Snow corridor is an older retail section of Watauga that is prime for redevelopment. In addition, the Tarrant County TEXRail bisects the southern tip of Watauga that fronts Rufe Snow and there is substantial new development occurring along Iron Horse Boulevard (including multifamily), which is just south of the Watauga city limit. Will there be new demand for redevelopment nearby associated with the North Richland Hills/Iron Horse Station (6531 Iron Horse Blvd., North Richland Hills) and associated redevelopment in the area?

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**The RTMU designation is new to the market and new to Watauga. The hope in limiting the RTMU to the 377 Corridor is that the City is able to concentrate development interest in this area, specifically within the North and South Gateways. The character of retail along 377 is very different than along Rufe Snow. Rufe Snow, because of the types of retail that occupy smaller lots, is more insulated from the current changes in retail shopping patterns than the 377 Corridor. In addition, over applying this designation would likely result in a disparate number of developments that do not have pedestrian connections and would take much longer to complete. If the RTMU is successful along the 377 Corridor, it is a possible consideration for expansion in the future.**

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**Comment 6B:** On all of the mixed use developments referenced in the first meeting (Colleyville, Southlake, Keller, and North Richland Hills, please view aerials of surrounding areas and compare the development patterns). Watauga income demographics are below all of these cities, but is most comparable to North Richland Hills. Concerns noted: NRH development is along major highways/freeways and traffic arterials, which is an attribute not shared by Watauga. Denton Highway only has one side of the highway that is developable.

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**The 377 Corridor's traffic is more than enough to fully support the development and/or redevelopment of the area. In addition, mixed uses as defined in the RTMU area are significantly different than the cities noted. The RTMU area will not contain significant amounts of vertical mixed use as the cities mentioned above. In addition, current demographics of Watauga actually favor this type of development because land is more affordable and larger areas are available to redevelop, rather than large green field developments that require significantly more capital and infrastructure. Traffic patterns, location and demographics all benefit Watauga, which needs additional product types of the nature contemplated in RTMU to meet market demands.**

**Comment 6C:** With regard to the RT-MU Design Standards: On Section 2A and 2C, why would you want to exclude and prohibit drive through facilities for fast food and financial institutions? Most fast food franchises provide large property tax and sales tax revenue. Why would you want to exclude them in the new development? (If you look at the existing development along 377, the majority of the frontage properties are fast food.) While the concern may be walkability, the odds are that the 377 actual frontage will not be a "walkability area" due to sheer volume of traffic on 377. Watauga is primarily a residential suburb where many families rely on fast food establishments as they navigate their busy schedules, and drive through fast food restaurants serve this purpose.

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**Any fast food development that is performing at a high level will remain in operation. The RTMU designation only comes into effect when buildings go vacant. Additionally, the RTMU benefits from walkability and including drive thru facilities in the RTMU would hamper the walkability of the area.**

**Comment 6D:** b. On Section 2A, if not deleted in its entirety, move multifamily residential to a Specific Use instead of a General Permitted Use. The Citizens of Watauga do not want multifamily.

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**Residential development will need to occur to create density and diversity of housing type in Watauga. Additionally, the design standards are intended to ensure that any residential product is high quality. Finally, the MDP does function as a specific use in that City Council may reject an entire development based on any component they feel does not benefit Watauga and improve current development values. Just because a use is permitted in the Comprehensive Plan list of permitted uses does not mean an MDP cannot be rejected or amended.**

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**Comment 6D:** c. On Section 3: If not deleted entirely, then the multifamily general design guidelines are not stringent enough. As a minimum, they need to specifically prohibit boarding houses/dormitories.

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**The City's zoning ordinance already prohibits dormitories and boarding house today. The Comprehensive Plan amendment does not change existing zoning, nor rezone any property.**

**Comment 6E:** d. On Section 5A (1), Minimum lot size should be specifically defined.

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**The minimum lot size standards will be more clearly defined in the zoning ordinance. We provided more detail than what is customarily provided in a Comprehensive Plan Update in order to establish the standards and expectations that will need to be incorporated into future zoning ordinance amendments.**

**Comment 6F:** On Section 5B, the Minimum lot width for townhomes does not appear adequate. Most 2 car garage widths are 20 feet, which would allow no additional width for entry access.

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**This is typical of most projects of this type, but the zoning ordinance will set the final minimum lot width, setbacks, etc. (See response on Comment 6E).**

**Comment 6G:** On Section 5C, the minimum building setbacks should be increased. Most of gated apartments require some type of gated entry, and buildings should have additional setbacks. Multifamily should specifically prohibit development of any low income units.

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**Setbacks are intended to be kept to a minimum in order to enhance the walkability of the RTMU. Additionally, gates are typical of garden style apartments which are prohibited in the RTMU area.**

**Comment 6H:** On Section 5D, the building height of 75 feet or 6 stories should be lowered to 3 stores or 40 feet.

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**The height standards are to create the possibility of accommodating and attracting a hotel development in the area, however the zoning ordinance will set the final building height standards.**

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**Comment 6I:** On Section 5G, the maximum residential use within the RT-MU is not well defined. The NUMBER of multi-family units is not specifically defined. It states that the Multifamily use cannot exceed 30%, but it does not additionally define areas or maximum number of units allowed per parcel (or a total number of RT-MU units allowed for total land use plan). Is the 30% limited to land area of individual or assembled parcels or building area? Firmly believe that if the Multifamily use is left in document that there should be some type of maximum total number of multifamily units.

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**Residential cannot compose more than 30% of the RTMU. Development parameters are intentionally broad in the Comprehensive Plan in order to provide flexibility to the City Council to react to the market and master design plans. The City Council retains the authority to reject any application even if contemplated uses are permitted in the RTMU area.**

**Comment 6J:** In Section 6B(1), absolutely no street parking should be allowed. All developments should have totally self-contained parking.

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**All mixed-use facilities have street, and shared parking. It adds to the quality and efficiency of the RTMU by reducing large parking fields. In addition, self-contained parking is typical of garden style apartments which are expressly prohibited in the RTMU area. Parking plans must be included in the MDP and therefore are subject to City Council discretion.**

**Comment 6K:** In Section 8D, multifamily parking requirements should be defined so that parking does not overflow into adjacent areas. (Park Vista Apartments has a parking shortage due to poor planning.)

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**See answer to 6J.**

**Comment 7:** This is an exciting plan. I think it will give the city many variables in the future for the setup of our community. I have confidence in the P&Z and City Council to make the right decisions in the future for the City.

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**Thank you for your support and confidence in the City.**

**Comment 8:** I attended the January 28, 2020 meeting which I found to be very informative. How about an initiative to promote Watauga citizens being sure to patronize retailers in our city to try to mitigate the loss of sales tax revenue and hopefully minimize any property tax increases? I have only ever seen one such advertisement in over ten years of living in Watauga. It was a "shop Watauga" bench at an intersection at 377, I would hope for a more effective campaign, perhaps one promoting the benefits such as, "keep our property taxes low, shop Watauga." Thank you for your proactive efforts!

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**Thank you for your comment, the WEDC approved a Shop Watauga Campaign at its January 21, 2020 meeting and staff will be submitting additional business retention programs to the Board in the near future.**

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**Comment 9:** 1. For the RT-MU land use at the southwestern Watauga city limit along 377, what is the total number of single family homes that will be included in the proposed land use change? Of those homes included, how many are: 1) owner occupied, 2) rent house, and 3) vacant/unoccupied?

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**Based upon applications received as of February 13, 2020, there are 138 single family homes, of which 109 are Owner Occupied, 24 are Rentals, and 5 are vacant or unoccupied. Applications received include the following: active/inactive water accounts, vacant/unoccupied property registrations and single family rental properties registered in the City of Watauga.**

**Comment 10:** I attended the later meeting. Driving around Watauga I've noticed a LOT of places with very few trees or no trees at all. We are missing out on lots of benefits that trees provide: increased property values, beauty, cooling & shade, utilities savings, cleaner air, shelter for song birds and desirable wildlife, muffled traffic noise, and more, Please add tons of trees to the comprehensive plan. Watauga's western border should be lined with trees on both sides of Denton Highway from southern to northern border. That will definitely let people know when they are in the City of Watauga. Please don't allow sidewalks with tiny strips next to the road that are too small to plant trees. Please also consider making Watauga a Tree City USA with The Arbor Day Foundation. All applicable new construction or renovation permits should require planting trees. Please get the word out that currently Oncor provides 2 free trees every year to every resident who applies for them. Thank you very for your work in making Watauga a great place to live.

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**City staff appreciates the recommendation and will research the option further.**

**Comment 11:** I'm not sure how many times the residents of this city have to say it, but we do NOT want multifamily residential - period! Please remove this option from the plan.

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**Thank you for your input. It has been received and documented for the City Council.**