

Chapter 5

Zoning and Land Use

ZONING AND LAND USE: INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the zoning and land development decisions of City officials and developers have created Greensboro's urban form. Urban form refers to the physical composition of the city: how it is laid out, its mix of land uses, zoning pattern, density, and infrastructure.

In 2002, Greensboro's approximately 114 square miles could best be described as decentralized (in Greensboro's case, there are multiple growth areas, not concentrated around the city's downtown/core), with current growth centered in 13 areas as depicted in the development trends map included in this chapter. A detailed land use survey has recently been completed. The study shows the actual uses of the land, rather than what uses are permitted within each zoning district. One of the uses of this survey is that it reveals information such as undeveloped acreage. The undeveloped land, in combination with non-residential acreage, allows more accuracy in determining the number of persons per acre for the City, future residential density, and development capacity.

Several major factors will influence the rate and type of growth Greensboro can expect in the next 20 years. These factors include: environmental constraints (see chapter 7, Natural Environment), availability of water and sewer (see chapter 8, Water and Sewer), major road projects (see chapter 9, Transportation), existing land use patterns, zoning codes, and local development regulations and policies. Other influences include consumer demand, the local and national economies, state and federal regulations and policies, population growth, and local economic development efforts. Major technological innovations, utilities' policies, citizen habits, fuel prices, resources, quality of life, transportation infrastructure, community attitudes, and taxing policies add to the list of influential factors.

During the late 1960s and early 1980s, Greensboro conducted an aggressive annexation program. In the early 1980s, the City annexed three areas containing 6,534 acres and a population of 12,885. Since 1993, three major annexations were completed, comprising 7,352 acres and 8,767 persons. Recently, the City annexed Reedy Fork in northeast Greensboro, a predominantly undeveloped area. This area contains approximately 1,800 acres and is projected to eventually have 3,750 housing units.

ZONING AND LAND USE: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

Zoning

In July 2002, the Greensboro city limits encompassed approximately 114 square miles, consisting of 72,887 acres. Approximately 68.1 percent of the city limits was zoned for residential uses, approximately 31.4 percent was zoned for office, commercial, industrial or public/institutional uses, and 0.4 percent was zoned agriculture. Approximately 3,479 acres (4.8 percent) were in designated parks (see chapter 15, Parks and Recreation).

Residential zoning comprised the greatest proportion of zoning acreage, approximately 68.1 percent, or 49,628 acres (single-family, multi-family, traditional neighborhood, and planned

unit developments). Of these types of residential zoning, mixed use planned development (PUD) constituted only 4.6 percent, or 3,344 acres. These mixed use PUDs usually include a portion of commercial and/or office uses within their boundaries and are thus not always entirely residential in nature. Industrial acreage covered the second highest amount of zoned land, with 18 percent or 13,151 acres. The industrial category includes land zoned as corporate park, light, and heavy.

Development

Development patterns in Guilford County during the 1990s reveal that industrial growth was occurring primarily around Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTIA), interstates, and in south High Point. Commercial and/or office development followed or clustered around major thoroughfares.

Thirteen growth areas where substantial residential and/or commercial activity is occurring have been identified in Greater Greensboro. These areas include the PTIA vicinity, Jefferson, Wendover and I-40, Grandover, Green Valley, Four Seasons, Downtown, East Market, Morningside (Hope VI), Reedy Fork, Rock Creek Dairy, North Elm/Lake Jeanette, and Highway 68.

The City of Greensboro Development Ordinance, often referred to as the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), contains the procedures and regulations which pertain to land development within the city limits (please see the Greensboro Planning Department's Web site for the online version of the UDO at <http://www.ci.greensboro.nc.us/planning/ordinance/index.htm>). Among other elements, the UDO contains zoning regulations, which provide the principal legal tool for implementing the land use plan of a community. There are 34 zoning districts within the City that govern the permitted uses, dimensional standards, off-street parking, landscaping, and signage requirements for residential, office, commercial, industrial, institutional, and planned unit development land uses.

Land Use

Land use for everything from the city center to the water/sewer boundary was examined in a portion of the Comprehensive Planning process that was completed in July 2002. The map of existing land use shows a well-defined City center, with major highways radiating in various directions. Identified as its own unique land use category, Downtown is surrounded by older, mixed-use neighborhoods, university and college campuses and other institutions, and some of the City's oldest industrial areas. Beyond lies low-density, single-family residential areas, the predominant pattern in the City. Highway access influence is shown by commercial uses which line older highway corridors such as Battleground Avenue and High Point Road, and in major concentrations such as the I-40 interchanges at West Wendover Avenue and High Point Road. A similar pattern can be seen with industrial uses.

Single-family residential is the largest single land use category, occupying nearly 31% of the City's land area. Multi-family housing at 6% brings the proportion of residential use to 37%. Over 41% of the City is undeveloped, consisting of parks, golf courses, open space (public

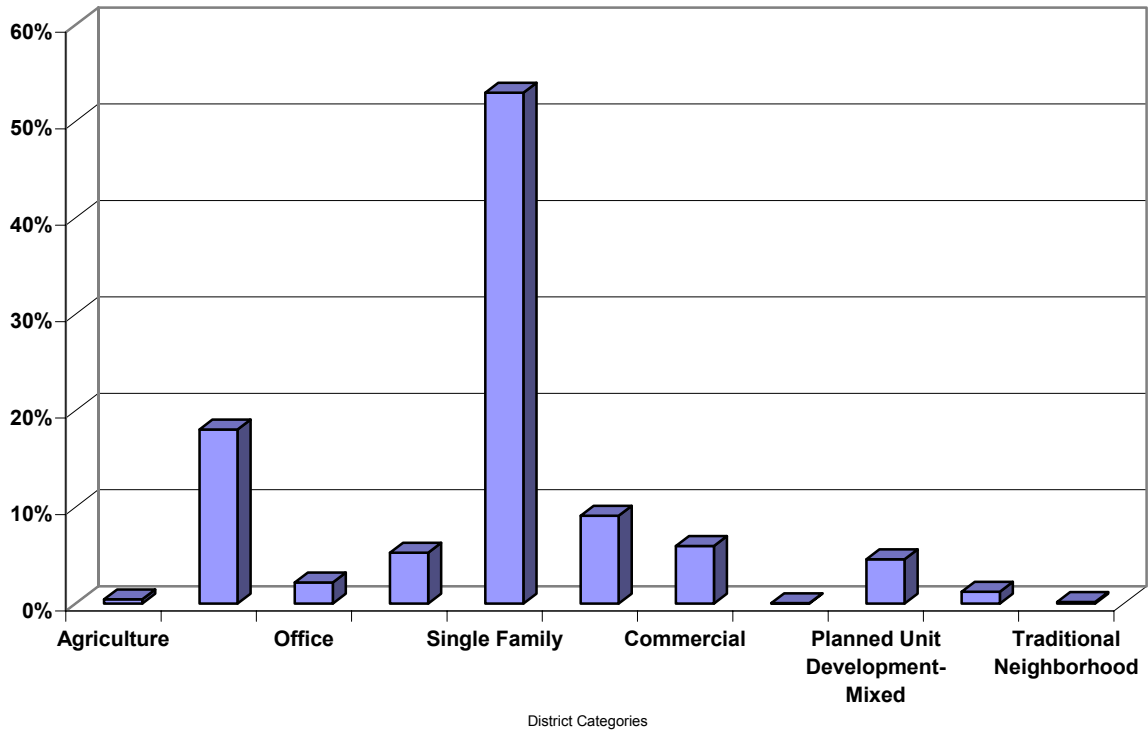
and private), woods, agriculture, rights of way, and water. Some of this land gives the City potential for infill development.

At the City limits, especially along the eastern fringe, the land use pattern changes, as the City's urban and suburban development encounters the County's largely rural/agricultural lands. Although there are a few sizeable areas of industrial use, the fringe area lacks significant proportions of commercial use, owing to the absence of major concentrations of population. Present land use in the fringe area is largely (54%) undeveloped; with roughly similar proportions of land in agricultural use and in "woods" or "open" categories.

Table 5-1: Zoning Distribution in Greensboro, 2002		
District Categories	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	320.03	0.44%
Industrial	13,151.37	18.04%
Office	1,599.80	2.19%
Public and Institutional	3,838.17	5.27%
Single Family	38,607.89	52.97%
Multifamily	6,637.56	9.11%
Commercial	4,349.40	5.97%
Planned Unit Development-Infill	28.92	0.04%
Planned Unit Development-Mixed	3,344.29	4.59%
Planned Unit Development-Residential	892.25	1.22%
Traditional Neighborhood	117.44	0.16%
Totals	72,887.12	100.00%

Source: Greensboro Planning Dept., July 2002.

Figure 5-1: Zoning Distribution in Greensboro, 2002



Source: Greensboro Planning Dept., July 2002.

ZONING DISTRICT DESCRIPTIONS

AGRICULTURAL:

AG AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

The AG, Agricultural District is primarily intended to accommodate uses of an agricultural nature including farm residences and farm tenant housing. It also accommodates scattered non-farm residences on large tracts of land. It is not intended for major residential subdivisions. The district is established for the following purposes:

- 1) to preserve the use of land for agricultural, forest, and open space purposes until urban development is enabled by the extension of essential urban services;
- 2) to provide for the orderly transition to urban uses by preventing premature conversion of farmland;
- 3) to discourage any use that would create premature or extraordinary public infrastructure and service - demands; and
- 4) to discourage scattered commercial and industrial land uses.

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL:

In the following districts the number refers to the minimum lot size in thousands of square feet.

RS-40 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-40, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate single-family detached dwellings on large lots and is intended solely for properties having one (1) or more of the following characteristics:

- (a) Lies within the 65 Ldn noise contour line;
- (b) Lies in a public water supply watershed and where an outfall to provide public sewer service is not available;
- (c) Lies in a portion of a watershed critical area to which an outfall to provide sewer service has been made available pursuant to an agreement, approved by the City and by another governmental jurisdiction, designed to limit development density to approximately that obtainable prior to sewer service.

RS-30 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-30, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate low-density single-family - detached dwellings on large lots in areas (outside of water supply watersheds and the 65 Ldn airport noise contour) without access to public water and sewer services. The overall gross density in RS-30 areas will typically be 1.3 units per acre or less.

RS-20 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-20, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate low to moderate density single-family detached dwellings in developments where public sewer service is required. The overall gross density in RS-20 will typically be 1.9 units per acre or less.

RS-15 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-15, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate moderate density single-family detached dwellings in developments where public water and sewer service is required. The overall gross density in RS-15 will typically be 2.5 units per acre or less.

RS-12 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-12, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate moderate density single-family detached dwellings in developments where public water and sewer service is required. The overall gross density in RS-12 will typically be 3.0 units per acre or less.

RS-9 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-9, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate moderate to high-density single-family detached dwellings in developments where public water and sewer service is required. The overall gross density in RS-9 will typically be 4.0 units per acre or less.

RS-7 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-7, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate high-density single-family detached dwellings in developments where public water and sewer service is required. The overall gross density in RS-7 will typically be 5.0 units per acre or less.

RS-5 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-5, Residential Single-family District is primarily intended to accommodate high-density single-family - detached dwellings in developments where public water and sewer service is required. The overall gross density in RS-5 will typically be 7.0 units per acre or less.

MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL:

In the following districts the number refers to the maximum number of dwelling units per acre (after the first acre). Public water and sewer service is required in all districts.

RM-5 RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT

The RM-5, Residential Multifamily District is primarily intended to accommodate duplexes, twin homes, townhouses, cluster housing, and similar residential uses at a density of 5.0 units per acre or less.

RM-8 RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT

The RM-8, Residential Multifamily District is primarily intended to accommodate duplexes, twin homes, townhouses, cluster housing, and similar residential uses at a density of 8.0 units per acre or less.

RM-12 RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT

The RM-12, Residential Multifamily District is primarily intended to accommodate multifamily uses at a density of 12.0 units per acre or less.

RM-18 RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT

The RM-18, Residential Multifamily District is primarily intended to accommodate multifamily uses at a density of 18.0 units per acre or less.

RM-26 RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY DISTRICT

The RM-26, Residential Multifamily District is primarily intended to accommodate multifamily uses at a density of 26.0 units per acre or less.

OFFICE:

LO LIMITED OFFICE DISTRICT

The LO, Limited Office District is primarily intended to accommodate low intensity medical, professional, administrative, and government office uses on small to mid-sized sites near residential areas.

GO-M GENERAL OFFICE MODERATE INTENSITY DISTRICT

The GO-M, General Office Moderate Intensity District is primarily intended to accommodate moderate intensity office and institutional uses, moderate density residential uses at a density of 12.0 units per acre or less, and supporting service and retail uses.

GO-H GENERAL OFFICE HIGH INTENSITY DISTRICT

The GO, General Office High Intensity District is primarily intended to accommodate high intensity office and institutional uses, high density residential uses at a density of 26.0 units per acre or less, and supporting service and retail uses.

COMMERCIAL:

NB NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

The NB, Neighborhood Business District is primarily intended to accommodate very low intensity office, retail, and personal service uses within residential areas. The district is established to provide convenient locations for businesses which serve the needs of surrounding residents without disrupting the character of the neighborhood. It is not intended to accommodate retail uses which primarily attract passing motorists. Compatibility with nearby residences is reflected in design standards for both site layout and buildings.

LB LIMITED BUSINESS DISTRICT

The LB, Limited Business District is primarily intended to accommodate moderate intensity shopping and services close to residential areas. The district is established to provide locations for businesses which serve nearby neighborhoods. The district is typically located near the intersection of collectors or thoroughfares in areas which are otherwise developed with residences.

GB GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The GB, General Business District is primarily intended to accommodate a wide range of retail, service, and office uses. The district is typically located along thoroughfares in areas which have developed with minimal front setbacks.

HB HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT

The HB, Highway Business District is primarily intended to accommodate retail, service, and distributive uses which are typically located along thoroughfares. The district is established to provide locations for establishments which cater primarily to passing motorists and require high visibility and good road access. Developments in this district generally have substantial front setbacks.

CB CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The CB, Central Business District is solely intended for application in the central core of the city. The district is established to encourage high intensity, compact urban development. The district is intended to accommodate a wide range of uses including office, retail, service, institutional, and high density residential developments in a pedestrian-oriented setting.

SC SHOPPING CENTER DISTRICT

The SC, Shopping Center District is primarily intended to accommodate a wide range of high intensity retail and service developments meeting the shopping needs of the community and the region. The district is established on large sites to provide locations for major developments which contain multiple uses, shared parking and drives, and coordinated signage and landscaping.

INDUSTRIAL:

CP CORPORATE PARK DISTRICT

The CP, Corporate Park District is primarily intended to accommodate office, warehouse, research and development, and assembly uses on large sites in a planned, campus-like setting compatible with adjacent residential uses. The district may also contain retail and service uses which customarily locate within planned employment centers.

LI LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The LI, Light Industrial District is primarily intended to accommodate limited manufacturing, wholesaling, warehousing, research and development, and related commercial/service activities which in their normal operations, have little or no adverse effect upon adjoining properties.

HI HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The HI, Heavy Industrial District is primarily intended to accommodate a wide range of assembling, fabricating, and manufacturing activities. The district is established for the purpose of providing appropriate locations and development regulations for uses which may have significant environmental impacts or require special measures to ensure compatibility with adjoining properties.

PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL:

PI PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT

The PI, Public and Institutional District is intended to accommodate mid- and large-sized public, quasi-public, and institutional uses which have a substantial land use impact or traffic generation potential. It is not intended for smaller public and institutional uses customarily found within residential areas.

TN1 Traditional Neighborhood District

The TN1 Traditional Neighborhood District is intended to establish land use and design standards to be applied specifically in neighborhoods where a variety of uses are permissible in accordance with general standards. TN1 Districts are designed to be walkable, pedestrian-and-transit-oriented communities which must include a variety of building types in accordance with an approved Traditional Neighborhood Development Plan.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT:

CU-PDR

CONDITIONAL USE - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT -
RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The CU-PDR, Conditional Use - Planned Unit Development - Residential District is intended to accommodate a variety of housing types developed on large tracts in accordance with a Unified Development Plan. The CU-PDR District also accommodates neighborhood business and office uses which primarily serve nearby residents.

CU-PDM

CONDITIONAL USE - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT -
MIXED DISTRICT

The CU-PDM, Conditional Use-Planned Unit Development-Mixed District is intended to accommodate residential, commercial, and light industrial uses developed on large tracts in accordance with a Unified Development Plan.

CU-PDI

CONDITIONAL USE - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT -
INFILL DISTRICT

The CU-PDI, Conditional Use - Planned Unit Development - Infill District is intended to accommodate residential, commercial, office, and neighborhood business uses developed on small tracts of land as infill development within currently built up areas in accordance with a Unified Development Plan.

SCENIC CORRIDOR (SCOD)

The scenic corridor overlay regulations are necessary and appropriate to preserve and enhance the appearance and operational characteristics of certain designated roadways; and to address development issues of special concern with specific requirements which relate to land use, traffic movement, access, environment, signage, landscaping, visual quality, and aesthetics.

HISTORIC DISTRICT (HD)

The historic district overlay regulations are necessary and appropriate to protect, safeguard, and conserve the heritage of the community, while enhancing property values within historic areas. The prescribed regulations are also essential in promoting the sound and orderly preservation of historic areas as a whole, and of the individual properties therein, which embody important elements of social, economic, political, or architectural history for the education, pleasure, and enrichment of all citizens.

Land Use Code	Current City Land Use		Water/Sewer Boundary		Study Area Total	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	98	0.13%	15,051	25.59%	15,149	11.44%
Single Family	22,583	30.68%	14,126	24.02%	36,709	27.72%
Multi-Family	4,371	5.94%	700	1.19%	5,072	3.83%
Commercial	3,463	4.71%	617	1.05%	4,080	3.08%
Downtown	358	0.49%	0	0%	358	0.27%
Office	1,133	1.54%	347	0.59%	1,481	1.12%
Institutional	3,498	4.75%	1,270	2.16%	4,768	3.60%
Light Industrial	3,957	5.38%	1,066	1.81%	5,023	3.79%
Heavy Industrial	3,828	5.20%	1,757	2.99%	5,585	4.22%
Airport Property	0	0%	3,238	5.51%	3,238	2.45%
Open	2,498	3.39%	1,711	2.91%	4,209	3.18%
Woods	11,536	15.67%	13,187	22.42%	24,723	18.67%
Park Land	3,172	4.31%	1,278	2.17%	4,450	3.36%
Golf Courses	1,189	1.62%	117	0.20%	1,306	0.99%
Water	3,341	4.54%	141	0.24%	3,482	2.63%
Owner Association Open Space	249	0.34%	45	0.08%	294	0.22%
Right-of-Way	8,324	11.31%	4,155	7.07%	12,479	9.42%
Total	73,598	100.00%	58,807	100.00%	132,405	100.00%

Source: City of Greensboro Planning Dept., 2002.

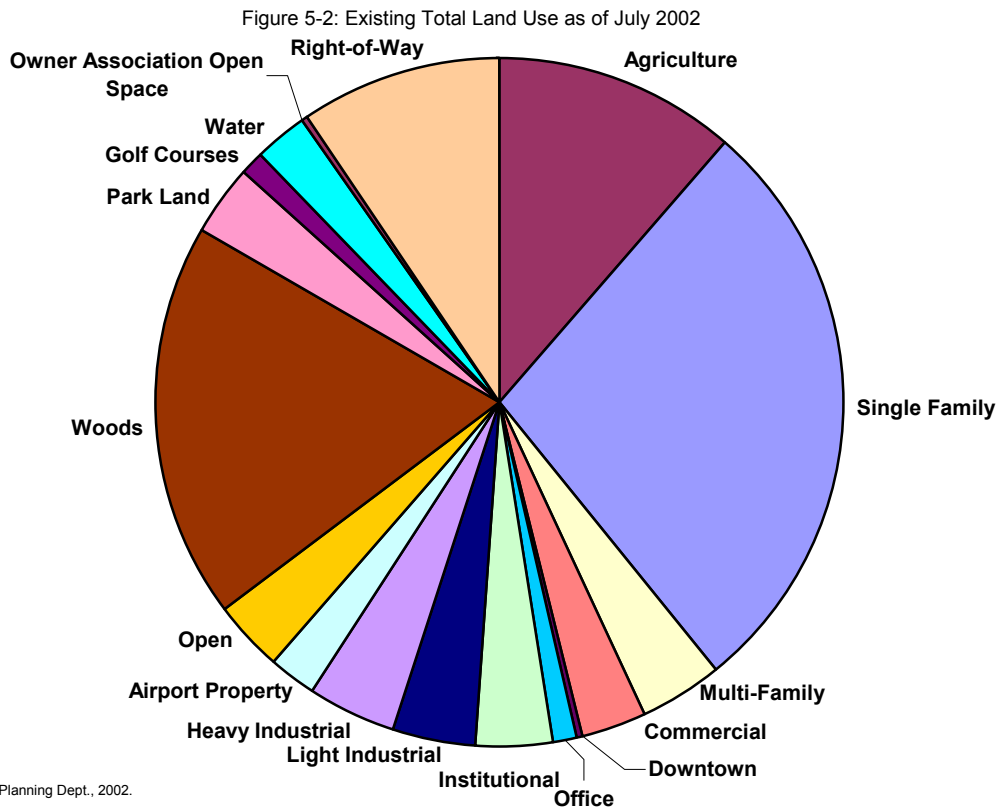
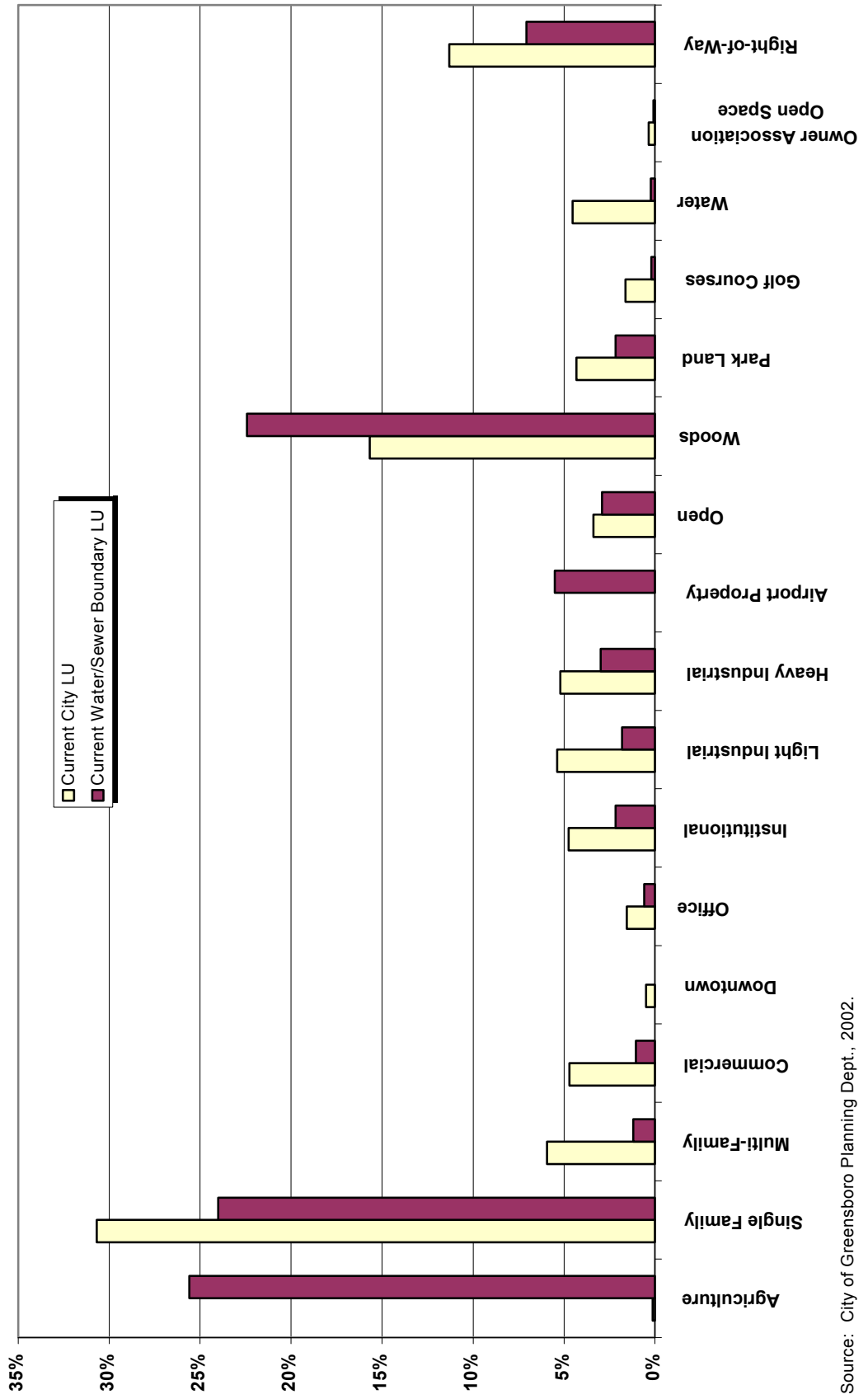


Figure 5-3: Existing Land Use as of July 2002



Source: City of Greensboro Planning Dept., 2002.