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NC-540 at NC-50 (Area 5)

The interchange area around NC-540 and NC-50 (Area 5) is a key link to I-40 and US-70, placing this site in a strategic logistics location. This presents an opportunity to locate flex space for warehousing and distribution. It is also a gateway into Johnston County, one of the fastest growing counties in the state and the US. The direct access to NC-50 and the connecting road, Cleveland School Road, opens up this area for commercial development that capitalizes on the traffic anticipated in the future. Blending these uses and complementing them with a range of residential products help create a different type of mixed-use development that supports a live-work environment.

- 1** A mix of employment uses organized around a life science center campus will be drawn to this strong logistics location.
- 2** Commercial development here is locally-serving. It will also serve the traveling public passing through this area, a key entry into Johnston County in the near future.
- 3** A mix of residential uses offers a live-work opportunity. It transitions in density as it steps toward the single-family neighborhoods at the Johnston County edge.
- 4** Remnant land maintained by NCDOT could lend itself to a significant passive recreation and nature preserve connecting people to the larger Swift Creek corridor which will offer a wide variety of recreational activities.
- 5** At the county line in an area where the topography is challenging for development, hard-to-access land can be an extension of existing single-family neighborhoods.

This conceptual illustration is one of several possibilities for development. It conveys the intended scale, mix of uses, organization of buildings and public spaces, locations for parking, and streetscape design. It is not meant to be prescriptive. Instead, it is a guide, expanding on the direction provided by the Character Typology Map.



A mix of commercial uses should be situated along a new street that parallels Cleveland School Road. Area residents as well as commuters traveling to and from Johnston County and people working in the life center campus that will likely locate in Area 5 will have easy access to this area and help make it a viable business location.



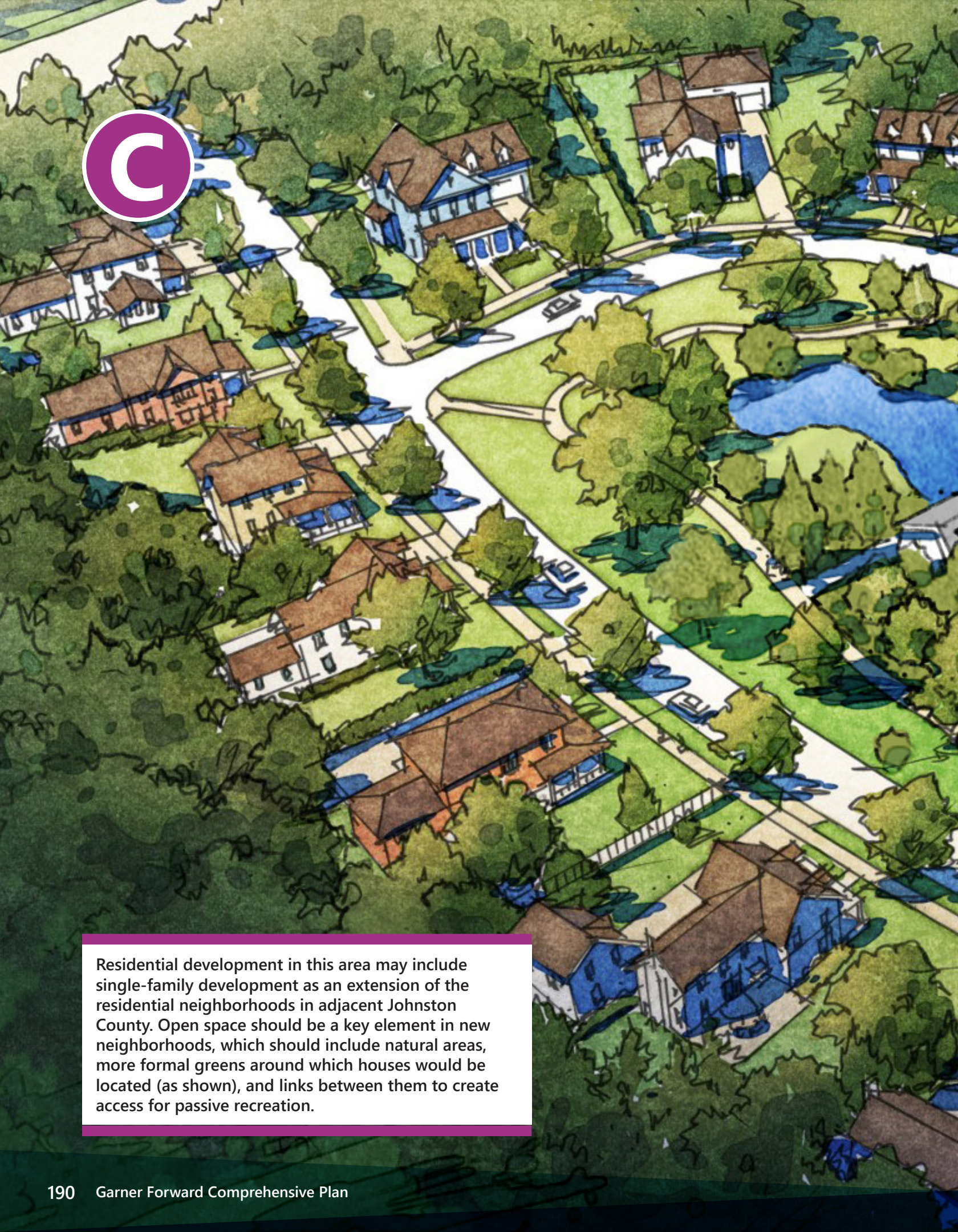


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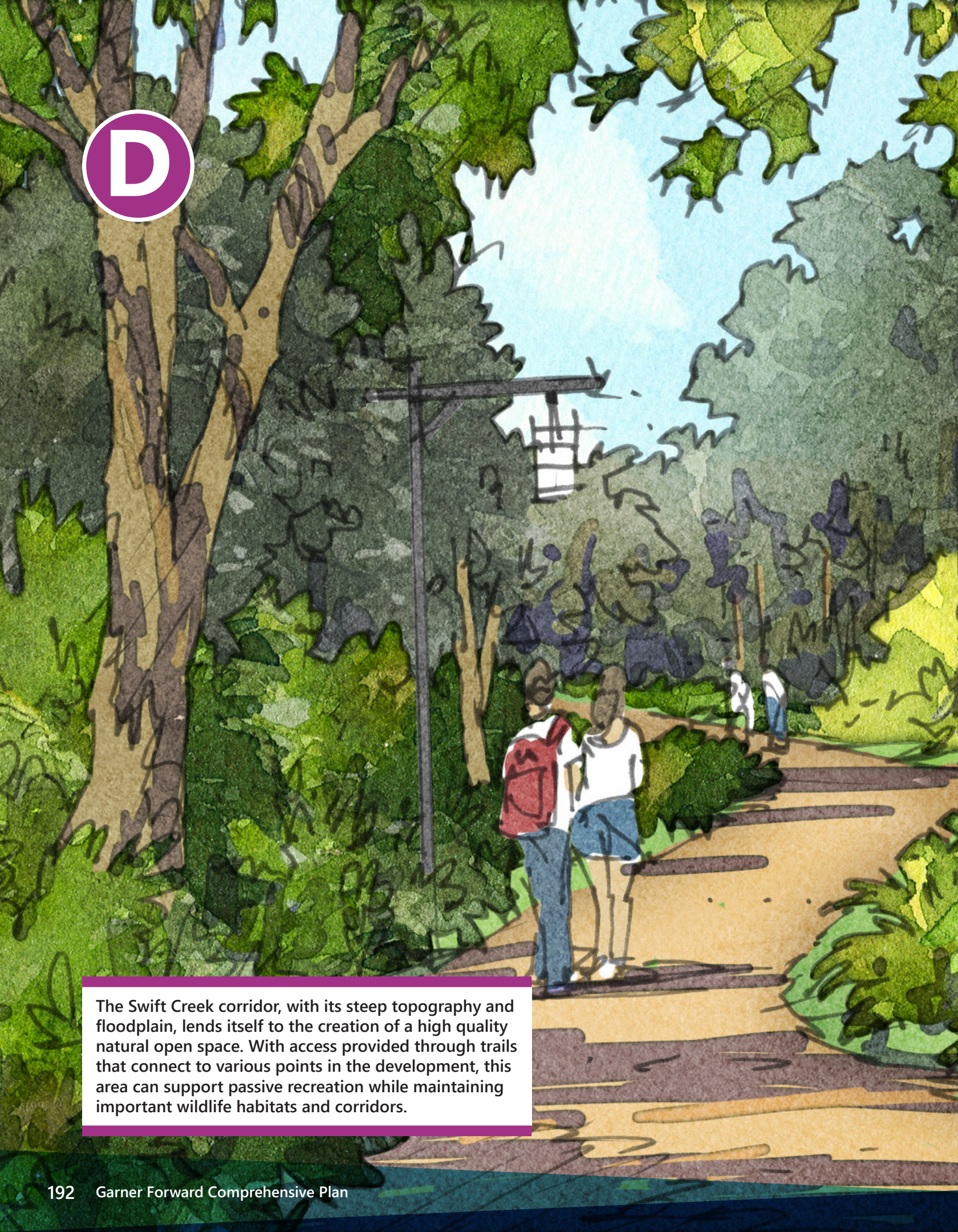
Area 5 is located with ideal highway access for life sciences and industrial uses. Flex buildings will likely comprise much of the development in this area.





Residential development in this area may include single-family development as an extension of the residential neighborhoods in adjacent Johnston County. Open space should be a key element in new neighborhoods, which should include natural areas, more formal greens around which houses would be located (as shown), and links between them to create access for passive recreation.





The Swift Creek corridor, with its steep topography and floodplain, lends itself to the creation of a high quality natural open space. With access provided through trails that connect to various points in the development, this area can support passive recreation while maintaining important wildlife habitats and corridors.



Leverage the access to the highway network to achieve economic development objectives.

With a connection to several federal highways, the town has an opportunity to attract and locate businesses interested in highly accessible sites to this area. As a gateway into Johnston County where growth is exceeding all projections, this area can also support a range of commercial development that meets the needs of workers and residents in the immediate areas as well as pass-by commuter traffic as Johnston County residents make their way home from work in Raleigh and other places in the Triangle Region.

- Prepare an area plan that demonstrates how various parcels can be developed in concert to deliver a mix of complementary uses:

- Retail, restaurant, office and service uses; **A**
- Industrial development of varying sizes, including makerspaces; **B**
- Life sciences; and
- Housing, including townhomes, and multifamily units in the form of lofts, condominiums, and apartments.



Introduce a gradation of housing density: low at the county line and increasing as development approaches NC-540.

Low density single-family housing in Johnston County can be continued in the southern part of this area but could quickly transition to higher density. The town should consider the following:

- Allow a mix of housing types that creates options for living close to this employment center.
- Increase housing density closer to the commercial uses and with availability of utility infrastructure. Consider attached single-family homes, such as lofts, townhomes, and multifamily units.

Consider connectivity a key ingredient for successful development of this area.

Over time, traffic volumes building on the existing roads will warrant capacity increases with new facilities. Some such facilities can be part of the internal network created within this site. Consider the following options to optimize mobility in this interchange area:

- Create a parallel road as part of a walkable network of local streets to ensure fewer vehicular trips on Cleveland School Road.
- Establish a hierarchy in the street network to separate truck traffic from areas where pedestrian traffic will likely be higher.
- Encourage a linked system of sidewalks, sidepaths, and trails designed for active recreation and non-motorized transportation.




Maximize open space as a primary element in the development pattern.

Open space, whether improved for public access or conserved to protect natural resources, can be thoughtfully integrated into the design of new development at this interchange area. The spectrum of possibilities ranges from formal greens to natural areas disturbed only to sensitively incorporate a greenway trail.

- Preserve existing vegetation to the extent practical so the natural environment is protected and new development is buffered from the traffic noise of the adjacent highway.

- Locate and design public greens, plazas, and trail access areas to serve as usable amenities. These features can take the place of buffers, creating positive connections at transition points rather than separating different uses unnecessarily.
- Require open space with all types of residential development, particularly that which serves as an extension of publicly-protected, accessible open space.

Reference: 



Preserve large, contiguous areas of open space for their natural resource value and function as buffers.

Steep topography and floodplains flanking an intricate system of creeks combine to offer a natural amenity unmatched in the Garner jurisdiction.

- Work with NCDOT and Triangle Land Conservancy to maintain the area owned by NCDOT as open space for the long term.
- Allow limited access to this potential conservation area, which may include low-impact trails. Multiple access points, such as improved green spaces at trailheads located in both residential and commercial areas, should connect hikers to the trails.

Reference: 