
Second Workshop Summary

The second public workshop in the development of the Apex Comprehensive Plan was held on Tuesday, October 14, 2003, at the CC Jones Community Building. It was attended by approximately 76 Apex residents and stakeholders.



The purpose of the second public workshop was to gauge the reaction of Apex citizens to a set of character areas and growth alternatives in order to discern their feelings on a variety of growth issues. These issues are captured in a series of questions related to growth and the potential impacts of growth management decisions. These key questions include the following:

- Do you think growth should be contained within a specific geographic area delineated by an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)? Or should the market drive the location of development, with no UGB?
- Do you support the concept of concentrating development in specific areas within Apex and, in doing so, accept the higher intensity of development in these areas than currently exists in Apex? Or would you prefer to keep development at relatively the same intensity throughout the town?
- If you support the concentration of higher intensity development in specific areas, do you support activity centers, employment centers, and/or transit activity centers (as described with images and development criteria)?
- Do you believe that "protecting small town character" is achieved through stricter development controls within a defined area of town (i.e. within the Peakway and/or the historic district downtown) thereby allowing greater flexibility in development elsewhere in Apex?
- Would you prefer no growth to any amount of growth regardless of form?

The meeting began with a presentation in which the project team summarized the results of the first public workshop and introduced several possible **character areas** (defined by density and types of uses) and **growth alternatives** that may be appropriate for Apex's future growth.

Character Areas were described with imagery and development criteria in order to illustrate the nature of the development that occurs or may occur in Apex (Please see figures 1-7). These character areas were developed based on feedback from the exercise conducted at the first public meeting. The types of land uses and the scale, density, and appearance of development preferred by the Apex citizens who participated in the exercise were incorporated into this series of character areas, which were in turn incorporated into a set of growth alternatives.

Because attendees of the first public meeting expressed concern about growth issues, such as whether the town should grow, how it should grow, and where it should grow, a set of **growth alternatives** was developed to help pinpoint Apex citizens' opinions about growth. The growth alternatives represent the possible range from the fewest controls on the location, size, and type of development to the highest level of control, incorporating different combinations of the character areas (please see figures 8-11). These options were used to illustrate four of the many possible patterns that may emerge if the town takes various positions on growth. The options do not necessarily represent the actual land use patterns being proposed for Apex. Instead, they show how various character areas might be distributed given the choices made regarding growth.

This presentation was followed by a **growth alternative assessment exercise** and a question and answer session. Each participant was asked to evaluate all of the growth alternatives and vote for the option that most closely represented the growth pattern he or she believes is appropriate for Apex. The project team encouraged participants to record comments about any option, especially changes they would make to their preferred alternative. This exercise aimed to gather feedback not only about the preferred growth alternative, but also about attendees' positions on the growth issues identified in the list of questions above.

The results of the voting were as follows:

Growth Alternative I: No UGB/Trendline	9
Growth Alternative II: Expanded UGB	22
Growth Alternative III: UGB with Concentrations of Development	27
Growth Alternative IV: No Growth/Limited Growth	17

The voting results provide only a limited amount of input regarding the participants' ideas. The comments on the worksheets revealed more specific answers to the key growth questions facing Apex. The following table tallies the comments related to those questions:

	UGB	No UGB
Do you think growth should be contained within a specific geographic area delineated by an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)? Or should the market drive the location of development, with no UGB?	26	3
	Concentrated/ Higher Intensity	Same intensity
Do you support the concept of concentrating development in specific areas within Apex and, in doing so, accept the higher intensity of development in these areas than currently exists in Apex? Or would you prefer to keep development at relatively the same intensity throughout the town?	16	6
	Support	Do not support
If you support the concentration of higher intensity development in specific areas, do you support Activity Centers Employment Centers Transit Activity Centers	14 8 15	1 9
	Support*	Do not support
Do you believe that "protecting small town character" is achieved through stricter development controls within a defined area of town (i.e. within the Peakway and/or the historic district downtown) thereby allowing greater flexibility in development elsewhere in Apex?	2	
	Yes	No
Would you prefer no growth to any amount of growth regardless of form?	10	12

* Three of the four alternatives included this element. At the first public meeting, attendees expressed overwhelming support for preserving small town character.

From the voting results, the preferences derived from the worksheet comments, and opinions voiced during the workshop, the following conclusions were drawn:

- As Apex grows and develops, growth should be limited to a clearly defined geographic area.
- Citizens attending the workshops support the idea of concentrating development, particularly large-scale retail and employment, in specific areas.
- Citizens attending the workshop support the idea of preserving open space, particularly west of Apex where there is an opportunity to preserve it in a more contiguous pattern than is currently present within Apex's jurisdictional area.
- Citizens attending the workshops have a desire to preserve small town character.
- High quality development design is a high priority.

Growth Alternative Plans in Detail

Growth Alternative I: No UGB/Trendline (figure 8)

The first growth alternative does away with the concept of limiting growth to a geographic area (an urban growth boundary or UGB). This option offers the most flexibility by allowing the market to determine the location and type of development in and around Apex. The illustration of this option shows how development would likely be scattered throughout the area. It accommodates all growth that might be attracted to Apex, and allows development to happen at its own pace. Without a UGB, development is allowed anywhere that it is supported by land, infrastructure, the market, and the willingness of the development community to build it, and is restricted only in its design by development standards set forth in the zoning section of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) (or a future version of it). This option also introduces the concept of defining a geographic area in the center of town within which more controls would be placed on development in order to preserve and encourage the type of development that fits Apex's small town character (including the scale and pattern of development) while allowing more flexibility outside the defined area. In downtown Apex, this option displays an area within which Apex's historic town center would be protected and supported. This option does little to protect open space west of town. This option is the most difficult for capital improvement planning, as it is less predictable. It accommodates employment more easily than any other option. The widespread pattern of development does not support regional rail transit.

Growth Alternative II: Expanded UGB (figure 9)

In this option, the idea of limiting growth to a geographic area, as recommended by the 2001 Growth Management Plan, is illustrated with an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), and Apex's projected population is accommodated at the same development density the town currently exhibits. In order to maintain the current density while accommodating the growth that will be drawn to Apex over the next 20 years, the existing UGB is expanded slightly. This option also includes the concept of defining a second, smaller geographic area in the center of town within which more controls would be placed on development in order to preserve and encourage the type of development that fits Apex's small town character (including the scale and pattern of development) while allowing more flexibility outside the defined area. Within the town center, this option shows protection of the historic downtown fabric. This growth alternative limits Apex's growth into the open space west of town, making protection of contiguous open space more feasible. The arrangement of development in this option would make planning for capital improvements easier than in the first alternative. This alternative accommodates employment in a pattern similar to that of Apex today. The low densities throughout Apex in this alternative would be too low to support regional rail transit.

Growth Alternative III: UGB with Concentrations of Development (figure 10)

The third growth alternative shows how growth could be contained within the adopted urban growth boundary, which would likely require the addition of small areas of dense development to accommodate Apex's projected population and accompanying growth. This option maintains the concept of protecting an area at the center of town within which higher controls would preserve and encourage the type of development that fits Apex's small town character, and well as the concept of protecting the historic downtown. In addition, this alternative illustrates the concept of activity centers (mixed retail, office, and residential uses), transit activity centers (mixed uses at transit-supportive densities), and employment centers (concentrations of office and industrial uses with some supporting retail and residential). This would allow more intense uses to be grouped together in areas where infrastructure can support them instead of being scattered throughout Apex's developed areas, and would provide locations for development types that are not present in Apex now but may be supported and desired. This growth alternative makes protection of more contiguous, rural space west of town more feasible than the previous alternatives. The concentrated uses in this option make capital improvement planning much easier than previous options. The designation of an employment center would accommodate office and industrial employment within a defined area. The establishment of transit activity centers would allow the densities to support regional rail transit in Apex.

Growth Alternative IV: No Growth/Limited Growth (figure 11)

This growth alternative demonstrates the result of limiting growth in Apex to a very small geographic area (the

area that has already been developed or approved for development), and thereby disallowing population growth in Apex. In this alternative, the density of development is maintained at current levels throughout Apex. The limited growth leaves the most contiguous open space west of Apex available for protection efforts. This is the easiest option for planning capital improvements as all changes in the development pattern would be minor and somewhat predictable. Additional employment opportunities would be difficult to accommodate in Apex using this growth alternative. The lack of increased densities or population makes this option unsupportive of transit. Using this extreme limitation of growth, opportunities for improving the tax base may be lost to adjacent communities, and additional negative effects of development that is shifted to other communities (such as traffic through Apex) may be felt. The risk of out-migration in the future is also a consideration; as development continues in other communities, those communities may become more attractive.