

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS: STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, WEAKNESSES

Note: Every comment recorded at the public meeting is listed as it was written (with some minor edits).

Public meeting participants were given the opportunity to "vote" on the issues they felt were most important. Numbers in parentheses represent the number of people that marked that a comment was a priority.

General headings (bolded) sum the individual comments. Comments were grouped under general headings to organize the data with some comments crossing several categories. This method is used to get an idea of participants' priorities and will be used as a general guide in creating the land use plan.

STRENGTHS

General

Sense of Community/Community Involvement (1)

Pride of our history & future
Level of citizen interest and concern, voter turnout meeting attendance - good quality of citizens
Community involvement in school system (1)
Community involvement
Community has sense of history
Sense of community – running into people, community activities

Small Town Feel (6)

Small town atmosphere, warm, friendly, people know people
Small township – know neighbor
Small town character has been preserved
Small town feeling-knowing people wherever you go (small population contributes to this)
Small town atmosphere (4)
Small town atmosphere (2)
Small community
Village atmosphere – low density

Family-oriented (2)

Family oriented/ family friendly.
Family oriented (2)
Great family community
A good place to raise children
Children and education are valued – family oriented
Traditional values

Multi-generational (1)

Multi-generational residents
Range of ages in population
Variety of people – different age groups, educational backgrounds, socio-economic
Diversity of age – elementary age to elderly

Location

Geographic location
Quiet – away from Chattanooga
Separation
Bedroom community – proximity to Chattanooga
Convenient location

Safety (5)

Safety (5)
Safety
Safety
Safety (crime)
Safety
Safety
Safety
Lack of crime – people feel safe
Safe
Feeling of safety and security

Other (1)

Intelligent, caring, committed people (town attracts these)
Historic district
Inclusive community
Active athletic program for youth
Stable and rising property values
Growth should progress slowly to maintain character
Capacity/Ratio
High educational level – high expectations
Diversity of churches
Low density population,
Geography, playgrounds, accessible officials and government, golf course
Plan development
Rural nature
Media – better feedback on issues
Non urban – trees, woods, low traffic, quiet, low noise level
Good police and fire department
High quality of life- safety/natural beauty/rustic/ recreation/arts
Low population
Well planned land use plan
Low population- x total of people
Quiet, calm environment-lack of noise from roads, industry etc
Climate – cool, hospitable (1)

Residential Strengths

Low Density (12)

Low population density, large lots, retention of trees
Low density residential areas – privacy at home (11)
Growth should progress to maintain character 1-2 houses per buildable acre
Max 4 condos/houses an acre-limited development
Maintain low density – Single family housing
Low density-residential development, contributes to character (1)
Size of yards- Low density
Small community with large lots (3/4) acre plus
Low density residential compared to other towns (Walden is better)

Senior Housing

Alexian Village
Alexian Village and retirement diversity
Alexian Village – age in place
Enough senior housing on the mountain

Housing Diversity

Diverse types of neighborhoods. i.e. Old Town's bungalows
Diversity of housing
Varied Neighborhoods
Diverse neighborhoods/mixed income neighborhoods
Range of residential property values
Number of existing neighborhoods
Established neighborhoods

Residential developments

Old Town
Old Town – stability, commitment
Hidden Brook, Old Town, Birnam Woods, Carriage Hill
Fox Run has good community – younger, active families, cul-de-sacs

Other (1)

Close proximity of neighborhoods fosters safety, sense of community
Long term residents promote sense of place and stability
Density fosters neighborly atmosphere/block parties
People know their neighbors
Presentation of older homes and sidewalks
No large apt. complexes (easily degraded) (1)
Good subdivision planning

Nonresidential Strengths

Businesses Type and Location (3)

Minimal business district/ small numbers clustered together/ small stores (3)

No big box businesses (Home Depot, Lowes)

Focused location of commercial areas, not spread out, easy to keep a handle on it. Contributes to small town ambience

Lack of heavy commercial development

Retail – Convenient

Good diversity of restaurants

Awareness of present commercial development

Business Signage

Minimal commercial signage/ordinance

Limited commercial signage

Other

Good environment for small businesses

Environmental Strengths

Natural Beauty (17)

Natural resources/streams, forests, views (4)

Natural beauty's unique location

Location to natural features and services.

Natural beauty of mountain-bird sanctuary (1)

Natural beauty- places: woods on Shackelford Ridge Road, Prentice Cooper, Rainbow Lake, creeks, Shoal Creek, Signal Point, viewshed off mountain, Mabbitt Springs (3)

Natural beauty- trees, creeks, plants, nature, climate

Natural beauty (6)

Natural beauty, trees, green spaces (1)

Natural beauty (2)

Trees

Trees

Trail, trees, wooded areas.

Trees, open space, flowers, birds- Palisades, Green Gorge, etc. near Alexian access to Prentice Cooper

Large amount of trees (greening)

Lots of trees (strength), lots of space yet know our neighbors and can't just cut down all the trees for growth.

Other (4)

Open space is a treasure we need to honor

Better air quality, climate and less noise

Ecological diversity (flora and fauna) (2)

Shoal Creek, Palisades, Green Gorge, Signal Point

Waterfalls and watersheds (Mabbitt Springs)

The terrain is a strength

Mountain – View – Environment – Woods (Trees, Creeks) (1)

Town location as part of Cumberland Plateau, natural areas like Rainbow Lake, Green Gorge (1)

Natural Areas

Biological diversity

Plants & animals

Environment is asset: clean air, water

Civic Strengths

Schools

Schools with great playgrounds and walking paths
Safety and security in schools
Excellent schools
School system involvement
Schools – parent involvement due to small community
Schools and parents participation in schools
Schools
Education opportunity
Opportunities for public/private quality schools
Quality School

Community Involvement

Community involvement
Community interest in development process
Loyalty of community – civic activities
Civic pride
Opportunity to participate in government
Community spirit strong
Volunteer Town Council – need more citizen participation than in the past
Ability to solve problems

Town Services

All needed services available in town
Self-contained community – services available
Town services – recreation – town police
Fire, police, EMS
Excellent police force
Enforce leash law

Town Amenities (1)

Public pool, tennis, library, parks, ball fields
Great 4th of July
Signal Mountain Playhouse
Great Churches
Boy Scout Troops
Recycling Center, Library
Walden, Pumpkin Patch
Summertown & Little Brown Church
Amateur sports program for kids
Playhouse & MACC & Bachman
Recycle system
Recycling center (1)
Recreational sports program
Boy scouts, girl scouts, daycares, church programs
Cultural facilities
Recycling center
Sports programs and activities for children-diverse, competitive recreational-baseball, swimming, tennis
Tennis, pool, ballparks
Recreation – baseball, soccer, basketball, town gym, swimming etc

Excellent youth programs
Diversity of activities
4th of July

Other

Churches
Zoning is strength

Parks and Open Space Strengths (1)

Public pull offs for vistas living conditions as N. Palisades

Prentice Cooper

Trails, public open space and community (Signal Point and Rainbow Lake)

Open space – trees

Proximity to state forest

Family friendly, recreation facilities

Outdoor activity – Need lakes

Green space and trails (1)

Park – Natural and recreation (Golf Course)

Swimming pool, opportunities for activities

Tennis courts, ball fields, hiking trails

Outdoor recreation-hiking, mountain biking, unimproved public areas

Golf and country club (sledding area) and tennis, softball, Althaus Park, Rainbow Lake, Green Gorge

Transportation Strengths (3)

Sidewalks

Need Sidewalks

Sidewalks (though torn up)

Sidewalks (old strength) (1)

Other

One traffic light

Only one traffic light

Narrow roads, low speeds, scenic, pleasant

No more trucks – traffic lights – congestion – loss of small town feel

Easily to get to places

Small size of community – concern growth will increase traffic (2)

Courtesy/tolerance of bikes from general public especially off 127

OPPORTUNITIES

General Opportunities

Planned Growth (21)

Chance to limit growth (2)

Manage development and growth

Set example of how to manage growth and quality of life

Implement state of art growth plan (1)

Protect integrity (1)

Preserve qualities and strengths (1)

High quality development – Shackleford Ridge-central focus of commercial (6)

Controlled development – Quality and location (2)

Carefully plan development to preserve character of town

Develop 100 year visionary plan

Opportunity to plan growth instead of haphazard development (1)

Can make Shackleford Ridge something special, not cookie cutter (1)

Leverage high school to develop regulations that benefit town, not developers (5)

Strength as well as opportunity, nature, spirit, family sense of community, school system to maintain this for future. (1)

Study Capacity (30)

Once the moratorium is lifted how is the city going to provide water and other infrastructure? (2)

What is the capacity of the mountain? to keep it a nice place to live? Traffic, school, density of population, trees, green space, safety. (7)

Do not have to accept growth limit population. Numbers addressing density opportunity. (2)

Need environmental/topographical study of this area to determine how much growth our town can sustain in terms of sewage, transportation, water quality (e-coli in streams, runoff) (7)

Determine realistic population density-conservative (5)

Look at mountain soils, hydrology & other natural features (slopes etc.) to determine density. (7)

Control Population Growth (10)

Maintain current population density (7)

Population growth – Opportunity to limit population

Keep the population in check

Preserve the strengths we have by controlling population (3)

Maintain Small Town Atmosphere (1)

Keep small town atmosphere

Make more of a town rather than a bedroom community (1)

Maintain the small town

Citizen Involvement (1)

Good folks interested in town

Citizens need more voice

Let landowner have more voice (1)

People making the decisions are more responsible to people

Other

St. Simon's Island good example

Bad development

Opportunity due to lack of development

Landscape protection – Landscape ordinance (2)

Window of opportunity to act with some urgency
Creative ways of zoning vs. current approach (1)
Limit building permits with a cap (1)
Developers to pay impact fees (1)
Growth to support the new high school
Solar and wind options; land use priorities for horses, rural environment.

Residential Opportunities

Housing Diversity (5)

Economic housing for entry level profession (e.g. Policemen, etc.)

Need housing choice- types/balance/price

Zoning for varying home types (3)

Improve housing opportunities for young families, empty nesters

Denser development around the new school: town homes, condos not in existing neighborhoods

Places for singles and senior citizens near town – quiet

Put condos where SMMS is.

Zero lot line housing development (2)

Smaller homes- Like the ideas of Randall Arendt

Demand for homes for first time buyers, retirees that would like a smaller place

Need more affordable housing

Need for down-sizers- low maintenance (offer similar arrangement as Westfield)

Large lot sites

Cluster Development/Conservation Subdivisions (1)

Adopting Randall Arendt's vision for new neighborhoods: open space, mixed housing types, trails, green space, congregating areas

Cluster development possibilities (1)

New development does not have history, character; clustering homes with green area can help provide character

Improve zoning to reduce focus on lot size and focus on density (per last month's presentation)

Cluster development needed.

Density

Low density development

Adding density on Taft?

Four condos/houses – acre – limited development

Old Town

Old Towne with open space

Zoning that would allow Old Town to be built today

Green Space in Neighborhoods

Developers contribute green space when they develop subdivisions

Preserve the existing open space in established neighborhoods

Other

Control residential growth (1)

Nonresidential Opportunities

Planned Growth (4)

Control business growth

Planned commercial growth

Develop new commercial areas with interest and character like Savannah, Charlestown,

Highlands, Hinsdale, IL. (1)

Limit commercial property to Taft

In future commercial will be built- in doing this it should respect the terrain of the mountain. (3)

Façade Improvements (1)

Improve facades of existing commercial properties (1)

CVS Pharmacy not good – looks bad – traffic ugly

Expanded Non-residential Opportunities (4)

Expand commercial zoning opportunity (liquor store) (3)

Need more restaurants (is there the population to support these?)

Quality restaurants

Need more retail establishments: clothing, extensions of major stores: Kathy's Closet an example

More retail, tax base, medical clinic

Consider mixed use developments

Teen center – Old Middle School, old CVS (1)

Need more commercial

Other

Have empty spaces

Retail left b/c of increase in taxes

Street Zoning Laws: sewers, parking setbacks, greater soft beds

Trees on commercial properties

Environmental Opportunities

Tree Preservation (4)

Opportunity to preserve trees – no clear cutting (1)

Ordinances to prevent clear cutting (3)

Enact tree ordinance specifying which trees can be cut and enforce it.

Kudzu control

Kudzu control

Kudzu eradication program

Too much kudzu

No goats

Protect Natural Environment (2)

Maximize green areas for environment (1)

Protect integrity of environment

Plan for preservation of natural environment

Plan ecologically sustainable development (1)

Protect Water Resources

Preserve the wetland and stream corridors

Restore Rainbow Lake to "safe" conditions

Civic Opportunities

Sewer Service/Septic (4)

Improvement of sewers
Enforce septic tank codes
Connect existing homes to sewer lines
Better sewage treatment or can't accommodate growth efficiently
Develop preventive maintenance plan, septic, sewer
Comprehensive sewage treatment plan (4)
Separate density – sewers first to existing development
Offer option to connect to sewer line along Timberlinks when new line installed

Governmental Cooperation (2)

County, Walden and Signal Mountain intergovernmental cooperation
Keep working together
More coordination w/Walden and unincorporated county regarding services
Integrate local governments (1)
Consolidate towns (1)

Infrastructure

Expand services as town expands i.e. development fees to pay for cost of extending services to new development (1)
Maintain current infrastructure

Other

Retain strong education system
Maintain Toll House and Historical places
Monument at James/Timberlinks
Elected Planning Commission- bad development (1)
Storm water control
Need more fire trucks in case of forest fires (outside town limits)
Maintain our public properties better 1. roadsides 2. parks
Curbside recycling
Create more athletic fields/recreational fields

Parks and Open Space Opportunities

Trails (4)

Build more trails

Bike/Hike trail down mountain – non-motorized (4)

More hiking and biking trails

Green Space Expansion and Promotion (5)

Green space preservation

Town could get involved in land conservation through conservation easements, tax breaks for donations, agreements not to develop (4)

Pursue grants for public land acquisition

Create more parks

Planned green space

Promote the green spaces (1)

A park where SMMS is: Theatre – Bowling Alley

Other (2)

Rainbow Lake – new dam-cleaning – service projects – restoring – safety (1)

More help in parks and town facilities (1)

Transportation Opportunities

Trails, Sidewalks, Bicycling (10)

New neighborhoods have greenways, sidewalks (2)

Add new sidewalks

Biking/jogging trails among new communities

Developers contribute to costs of sidewalks, bike paths

Dedicated trails – bicycle

Greenways –mixed use trails – not concrete- Old Town sidewalks changed to natural materials – recycled materials (6)

Hiking trails at the beginning and throughout new developments/neighborhoods

Opportunity to make community more walkable and bikeable and family friendly (2)

New Road (7)

A new road could be a useful possibility (1)

Another road up the mountain

Another way to outside world

Improve and/or add road and access up mountain (4)

Review additional transportation access (2 access roads may not be sufficient)

Improve road up and down mountain

Another road up and down mountain

Determine maximum population of town in terms of traffic capacity (ingress/egress from mountain)

New road off mountain (2)

Truck Traffic (7)

By-pass for Signal Mountain, find an alternative to traffic around mountain (Suck Creek?) (4)

Legislate 14 wheelers, truck traffic (3)

Bus Stops (1)

Carefully think school drop off and pick up

Plan bus stops – safer for young children (1)

Other (2)

Emergency plan for access

Revisit speed limit changes

Cul-de-sacs and designs can contribute to community

Access to Shackleford Ridge from Timesville Road (1)

Seek funds for restoring roads after construction other than taxpayers

What is the true capacity for growth, mainly automobile? (1)

WEAKNESSES

General Weaknesses

Lack of Planned Growth (7)

Past development did not always consider long term effects (e.g. e. coli in streams, sewer system)

Haphazard past planning – current constraints (2)

Traditional planning process driven by greed and arrogance

Current zoning regulations do not protect natural resources and small town character (1)

Concern about what county will do density, transportation. (3)

Lack of orderly growth pattern (1)

Lack of foresight

Lack of Information (1)

Lack of information – i.e. environment, traffic studies, etc

Lack of adequate citizen input (1)

Lack of understanding of citizens regarding growth issues

Lack of Diversity

Lack of social, economic, ethnic diversity

Signal Mountain lacks diversity of culture

Other (4)

Increasing property values – younger generation won't be able to afford mountain.

Uncertainty of what the H.S. will bring

Seclusion – escape – keep out

Strength – increase in home value also a weakness

History

Development can provide discord

Geographic location creates physical limitations for growth

Rapid intense growth

Impact (negative) of growth on infrastructure- roads, sewer, utilities, schools- unmatched capacity? (1)

Losing agricultural areas (3)

Residential Weaknesses

Sense of Community

Large homes can breed isolation

Promotes cooperation, neighborhood interaction

Subdivisions that lack a sense of community development house size, clear cut land for development

Old Town has sense of community, architecture, Arts & Crafts, new development that is compatible and complementary

New residential development seems to attract "pass through" residents

Other

High density development leads to problems

Poor subdivision regulation and lack of landscape ordinance

Construction on St. Charles Avenue

Remove all the trees, cookie cutter development

Diversity of future housing opportunities

Nonresidential Weaknesses

Vacant Property

Could use old CVS

Could use old SMMS

Do not use all commercial now available

Lack of Commercial Design Standards (3)

Lack of strong commercial design

Lack of control of control of the architecture of the commercial buildings

Commercial areas lack character because of zoning restrictions

No design standards for commercial (3)

Need commercial buildings to blend into neighborhoods as in Brentwood, Tennessee

Development Not Concentrated

Commercial zoning is spotty- there are "strange areas" zoned commercial in between residential zones

Lack of concentration of commercial areas

Too much commercial on Taft Hwy – Group commercial

Other (3)

Lack of support for community-Retail establishments (restaurants fail, etc.)

Weak business growth plan

CVS Parking lot is stupid and dangerous

Lack of entertainment in commercial development (2)

Lack of sales tax revenue due to stagnant/declining commercial base (1)

Environmental Weaknesses

Clear-cutting of Trees (1)

Clear cut development

All trees cut down, storm water run off to creeks and sewer

Lack of protection for trees and green space (ordinances to limit clear cutting) (1)

Clear cutting – county land

Water Pollution (5)

Water pollution

Ground water problem

Water pollution – health issues (1)

Water quality – polluted streams, related to sewer/septic (4)

Other (2)

Thin soil, slopes, physical limitations

Extended not burning – county burning

Abusing natural resources: Rainbow Lake, creeks (pollution), vandalism of trees, rocks

Bluff beautification

Need to preserve natural habitats-plants (2)

Civic Weaknesses

Sewer/Septic (18)

Sewage/ septic tanks (2)

Septic and sewer problems

Lack of sewers in existing neighborhoods

Aging septic systems causing seepage into streams, e.g. deterioration of Rainbow Lake

Sewer system (2)

Inadequate sewer system – Perc rate problems (3)

Sewer treatment plant

Inadequate sewage treatment and access (4)

Sewer infrastructure (leaky)

Lack of good terrain for septic systems

Water, sewage drainage issues (3)

Quality of life issue: Septic/sewer weakness in the sense that prior planning could be inadequate and has already been inadequate. (4)

Hidden Brook follow-up to previous septic comment. Built on rock, but home owners gave money for future sewage system then gave money back to developers. What do we do?

Town Services/Roles

Lack of building inspectors- Need more inspectors

Too many police- poor resource allocation-need to develop regulation

Waste Management: Solid Household

Road obstructions -leaves (code not enforced)

Water system inadequate

Litter and trash, streets and public spaces-

Trash on roads – Shackleford Ridge Rd.

Services overextended?

Trash service projects

Police service – negative comments

Utilities' Services

Need underground utilities

Governmental (6)

Elected officials that yield to development pressures

Current Planning Commission self serving developers (1)

Too many municipalities – lack of coordination

Planning should be elected – conflict of interest (5)

Pro-Growth Planning Commission (town)

Lack of combination/coordination with Walden

Other

Potential for new high school to use excessive resources/ sewer/ \$ BOND (3)

Property taxes high

Parks and Open Space Weaknesses (1)

Destruction of trail system in Shackleford Park was tremendous lack of planning (1)

No input into county park – use for recreation, independent use

Not many neighborhood playgrounds

No teen center or opportunities

Nothing for teenagers to do

Transportation Weaknesses

Sidewalks (9)

Limited sidewalks in neighborhoods

Not pedestrian friendly

Transportation system not friendly to pedestrians, children, bicyclists and animals (4)

Lack of repair of old sidewalks- (Old Town), need code changed on books

Lack of neighborhood sidewalks – no linkages – Shackleford Ridge Road (2)

Need sidewalks and other paths

Sidewalks – lack there of (2)

Lack of pedestrian access – need more sidewalks – James Blvd- Ridgeway Ave (1)

Connect neighborhoods with sidewalks

Lack of sidewalks and bike paths

Access on/off mountain (6)

Limited highways down mountain

New road off mountain

Transportation infrastructure up and down mountain a problem

No extra road up mountain (1)

No coordination with Sequoyah – need another way off

Lack of quick ingress/egress, not very easy to access

Access from off mountain (affects emergency response getting people to hospital, etc.)

Road up and down mountain – safety issue, another lane

Limited major traffic arteries up and down mountain, Timberlinks Rd. ability to handle additional traffic (5)

Transit (1)

Poor public transportation

Transit – Traffic (1)

Lack of public transportation

No bus service

Lack of public transportation

Bicycling Facilities/Hiking Trails/Greenways (5)

No bike paths- 2002 Bicycle Master Plan (1)

Lack of bicycle path

Bikeways – need more safe bike lanes on Timberlinks, James, Taft, Palisades, Signal Mountain Road

Lack of Greenways

Less than ideal bike safety and pedestrian and cars-traffic in general on major roads- Taft and James (1)

Inadequate walking and biking trails (try to encourage use for exercise and recreation) (3)

Walking and biking trails not networked together- Have to drive to where you can walk or bike

Bikes riding up and down mountain

Need to accommodate low/high speed bikers

Lack of sidewalks and bike paths

Traffic Congestion/Road Capacity (4)

Traffic congestion (2)

Capacity of the main road to handle additional residential/commercial traffic

Can't accommodate increase in traffic

Traffic from Timberlinks will go through residential areas

Traffic congestion – (too many cars for the roads- James, Rolling Way and other cross streets)

Rush hour traffic in particular – traffic contributes to accidents (2)

Roadway Maintenance (1)

Street maintenance

Road system capacity and maintenance. (1)

Road repair

Shackleford Ridge Rd. (1)

Lack of crossroad connection with Shackleford Ridge

Single road going to the new middle/high school

Management of traffic from Shackleford Ridge area (need to avoid cut-through in residential areas) (1)

Other (2)

Widening of roads????

Roads

Too many commercial trucks on side streets

Speed limit too low on main roads (2)

No good way to get on/off mountain except car

Lack of turning lanes

Hard to read street signs

Address Roberts Mill

Heavy trucks that carry lumber, noise.