



CREATE WILMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Growth Factors Report

Executive Summary

Growth Strategies Maps

Policies

Foundations Report

Growth Factors Report

DRAFT
1/30/15

Welcome to the future of Wilmington.



How to Use the Comprehensive Plan

Five Components of the Box Set

1

Growth Factors Report

Maps, graphs, and charts that support the policies and growth strategies. Provided are maps of existing conditions and various factors related to Wilmington's growth.

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.

2

Foundations Report

A summary of public input collected throughout the process and results from each tool, including the Neighborhood Planning Areas, Connect Wilmington, and Alternative Future Visions.

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.

3

Development Policies

Comprehensive policies address the themes/issues; policies are based on public input, best practices, the growth factors report, interlocal agency coordination and scenario planning results.

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.

4

Growth Strategies Maps

These maps illustrate desired areas for future growth, infill, and redevelopment based on public input and planning analysis. They are designed to work in conjunction with the development policies.

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.

5

Executive Summary

An "at a glance" reference for the entire box set.

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Find Your Way Around



Box Set Cross-Reference:
Name of Reference Provided

This symbol is used to point you to a different box set component.



Document Cross-Reference:
Name of Reference Provided

This symbol is used to point you to a different part of the document you are currently reading.



External Resource:
Name of Resource Provided

This symbol is used to point you to an external resource, such as a plan, report, or study not contained in the box set.

The color of the symbol indicates the type of reference. This is the location within the document



Cross-Reference Type
Name of Reference

The type of reference and its name is provided here.

Wilmington Comprehensive Plan Themes

The *Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan* is developed around seven key themes for shaping Wilmington's future:



Creating a Place for Everyone

Wilmingtonians want a diverse and inclusive community, full of family-friendly, vibrant, and creative environments. Citizens want a welcoming community that includes arts and culture, activities for youth, families, and seniors, and high-quality housing that is available to everyone.

Topics Covered:

- Affordable housing
- Arts & cultural resources
- Youth activities
- Seniors
- Family amenities
- Accessibility
- Parks and recreation
- Crime and safety
- Cultural diversity
- Job creation
- Education



Getting Around

Diverse modes of transportation are needed for an inclusive, connected community. Regional partnerships can link greenways and other amenities. Options for pedestrian and bicycle amenities, along with other modes of transportation, should be explored as valid alternatives to automobile transit, as well as other options for local and regional mass-transit.

Topics Covered:

- Interconnectivity
- Sidewalks
- Greenways
- Alternative transportation modes
- Mass-transit
- Traffic
- Regional cooperation
- Driver behavior
- Connecting land use and transportation



Regional Collaboration

Wilmington does not and cannot exist in a bubble. Collaboration with other local governments, including New Hanover and surrounding towns and counties, is critical to Wilmington's and the region's success. Cooperative relationships with UNCW and CFCC, as well as the public school system, state ports, and our utility providers will help us all flourish.

Topics Covered:

- Leadership/excellence in government
- Town and gown relationships
- Balancing needs and resources
- Common goals and collaborative policies



Changing Places, Revitalized Spaces

Development of vast open land is no longer an option in Wilmington; our future will include a significant level of infill and redevelopment. Envisioning suitable infill and redevelopment and optimizing existing development will be critical to our community's well-being, not only downtown, but within neighborhoods across the city. Balancing the need for open space and a well-designed built environment will be a key to future development.

Topics Covered:

- Infill
- Redevelopment
- Densification
- Neighborhoods
- Historic Preservation
- Sustainability
- Placemaking



Unique Places, Captivating Spaces

The "built environment" encompasses places and spaces created or modified by people including buildings, parks, land use patterns, and transportation systems. Since the built environment has profound consequences for individual and community well-being, all elements of our built environment should enhance the character of our community, being not only functional, but aesthetically appropriate, enriching the lives of visitors and residents alike.

Topics Covered:

- Aesthetics
- Site design
- Architecture and building design
- Code and tech standards
- Greenspace
- Infill
- Redevelopment
- Connecting land use and transportation
- Placemaking



Nurturing our Community

Environmental sustainability is at the core of where we want to go in the future. Our natural resources are a major factor in attracting residents and visitors to the area; balancing retention of their accessibility and protection of these resources will be a challenge. How we manage our interaction with the natural habitat, from parks, water, and open spaces, to locally-grown agriculture, to protecting water quality to solid waste disposal will be critical to our future success.

Topics Covered:

- Natural resources
- Tourism
- Balancing built and natural environments
- Greenspace/open space
- Parks and recreation
- Access to local food
- Water quality
- Climate change



Opportunity and Prosperity

Fostering opportunities for economic growth and development that enhance the concepts of each of the other themes is critical to our future prosperity. Creating jobs, building a strong workforce, facilitating commerce, and promoting business vitality are necessary to the success of a healthy, well-balanced community.

Topics Covered:

- Economic development
- Jobs
- Technology
- Health care
- Placemaking
- Code and technical standards
- Leadership and excellence in government
- Regional cooperation
- Common goals
- Leveraging resources
- Public-private collaboration

CREATE WILMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Growth Factors Report

The Growth Factors Report is a snapshot of what Wilmington looks like today and tells the story of how the city has become what it is. The report provides an assessment of current demographics and social and economic conditions and also provides a review of physical conditions, including natural and constructed systems and the patterns found in the built environment. The purpose of this report is to provide a factual understanding of current conditions and how Wilmington has changed over time. This report provides the context, or ‘starting point,’ from which the community moves forward to create a shared vision for the future.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

The steering committee was supported by staff from the City of Wilmington Planning, Development, and Transportation department, with assistance from every department within the city.

The Wilmington City Council appointed a 15-member citizen steering committee to assist in the public input process, provide guidance and leadership, and to represent the voice of the citizens in the overall process.

The members of the steering committee are:

- Robert Rosenberg, Chair
- Elizabeth Hines
- Randy Reeves
- Howard Capps, Vice-chair
- J. Clark Hipp
- Jennifer Rigby
- Carlos Braxton
- Paul Lawler
- Frank Smith
- Kemp Burdette
- Bonnie Nelson
- Kevin Smith
- Deb Hays
- Linda Pearce
- Tom Pollard

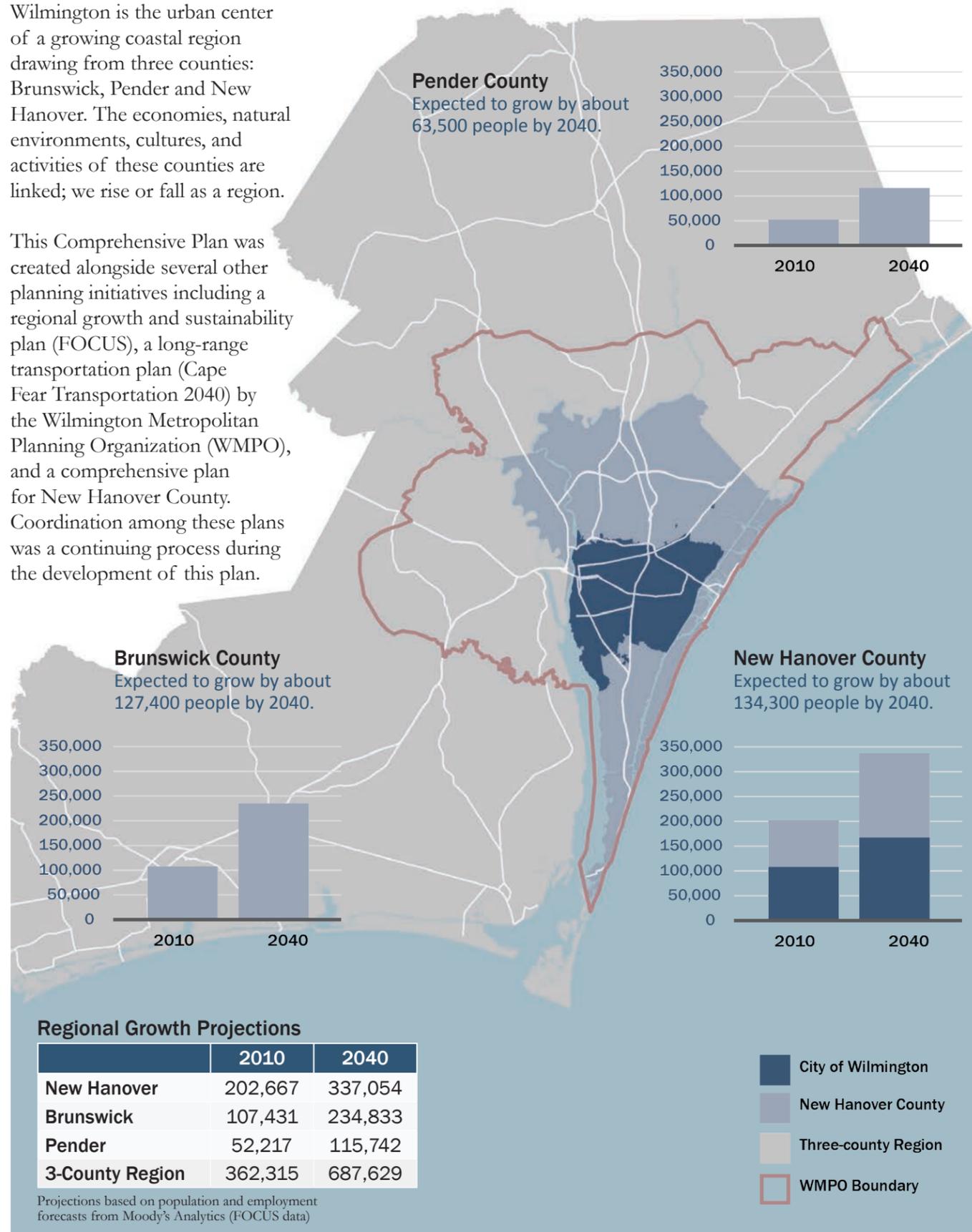
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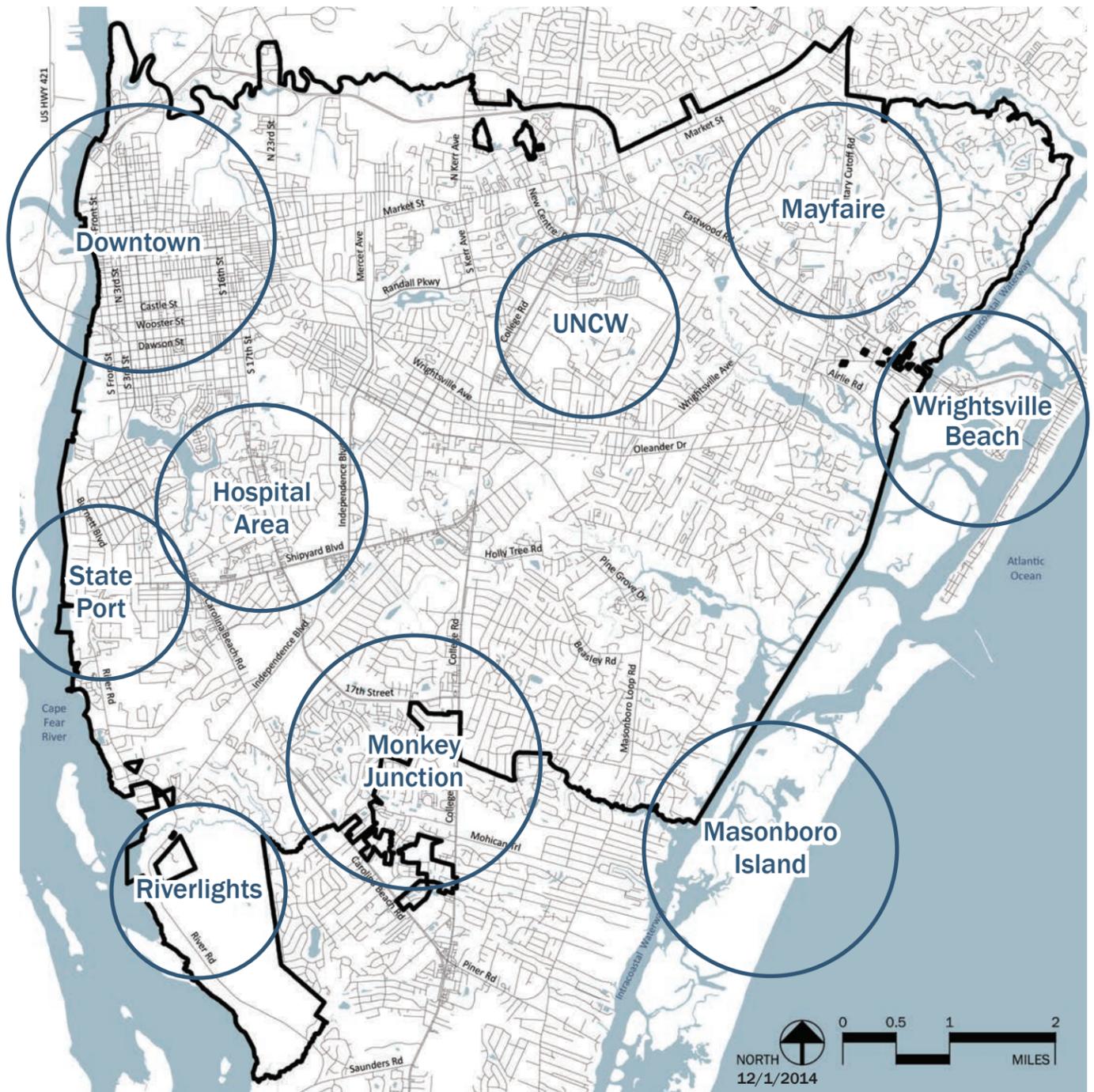
The Wilmington Region

Wilmington is the urban center of a growing coastal region drawing from three counties: Brunswick, Pender and New Hanover. The economies, natural environments, cultures, and activities of these counties are linked; we rise or fall as a region.

This Comprehensive Plan was created alongside several other planning initiatives including a regional growth and sustainability plan (FOCUS), a long-range transportation plan (Cape Fear Transportation 2040) by the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO), and a comprehensive plan for New Hanover County. Coordination among these plans was a continuing process during the development of this plan.



Map of Wilmington



This is a map of Wilmington's current corporate limits, major and minor streets, waterways, and general areas of reference. The city limits reach from the Cape Fear River on the west to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway on the east. Wilmington's corporate limits include a total of 52.9 square miles, or 33,858 acres.



Shape of the City
This is a rough outline of Wilmington. It is used to illustrate a variety of information throughout this report and other components of the Comprehensive Plan.



1 Wilmington's Growth

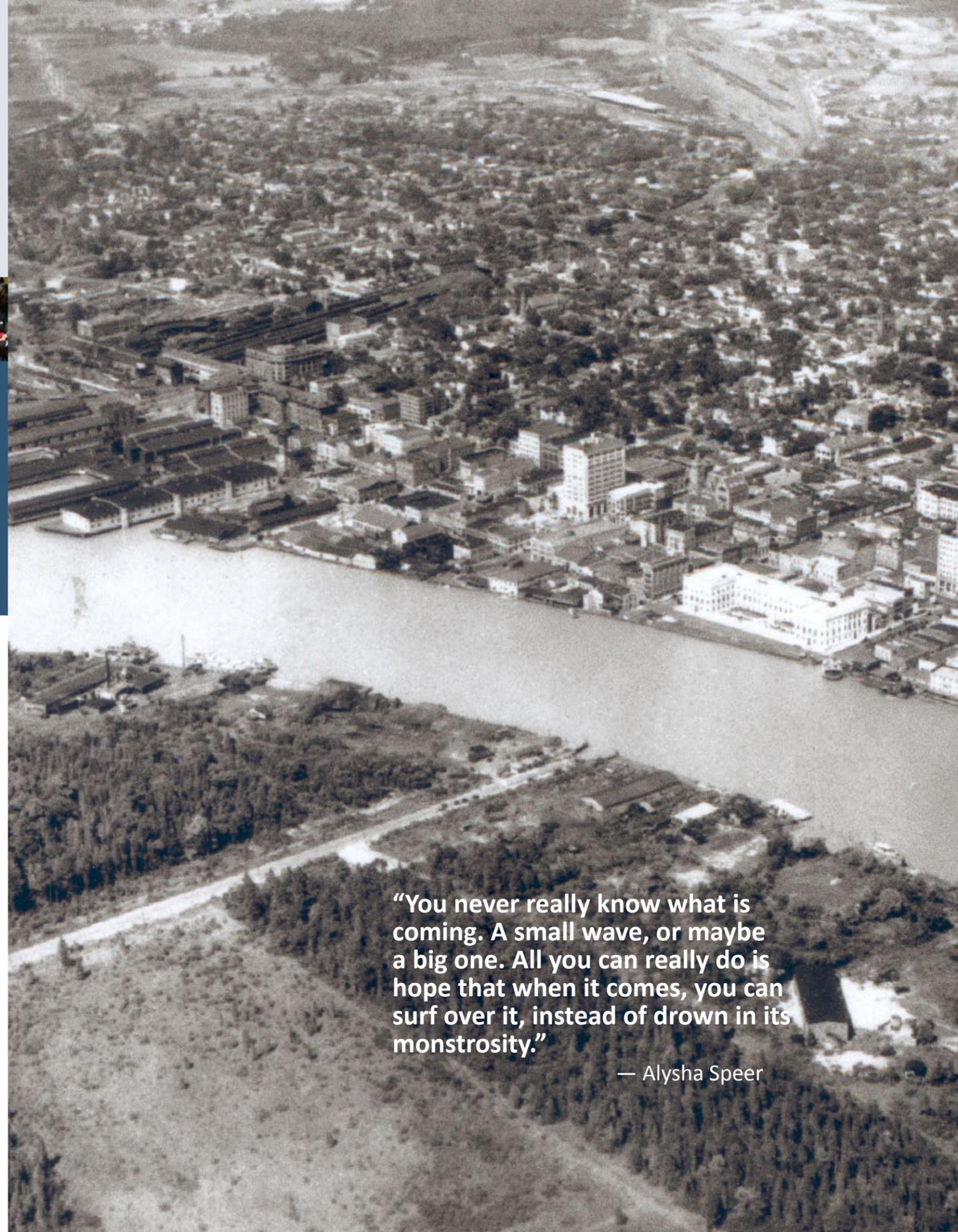
- 1.1 Growth in Population
- 1.2 Growth by Transportation
- 1.3 Growth by Annexation
- 1.4 Growth Trends by Decennial Census
- 1.5 Growth in Context
- 1.6 Population Projections

Downtown Wilmington - 1962

This image is taken from Wilmington's 1962 Future Land Use Plan. Much has changed since that plan was created, as much will continue to change after this report is produced. The Growth Factors Report is intended to provide a "snapshot" of existing conditions, not predict the future.

"You never really know what is coming. A small wave, or maybe a big one. All you can really do is hope that when it comes, you can surf over it, instead of drown in its monstrosity."

— Alysha Speer



1.1 Growth in Population

Historic Population Growth with 25-year Projection Wilmington & New Hanover County 1940-2040

The 1980s marked the beginning of a sharp growth period for the city. Projections for the next 25 years show a continuation of growth. In 2010, Wilmington had about 106,000 people, but is projected to have around 166,000 by 2040.

■ Wilmington
■ New Hanover County

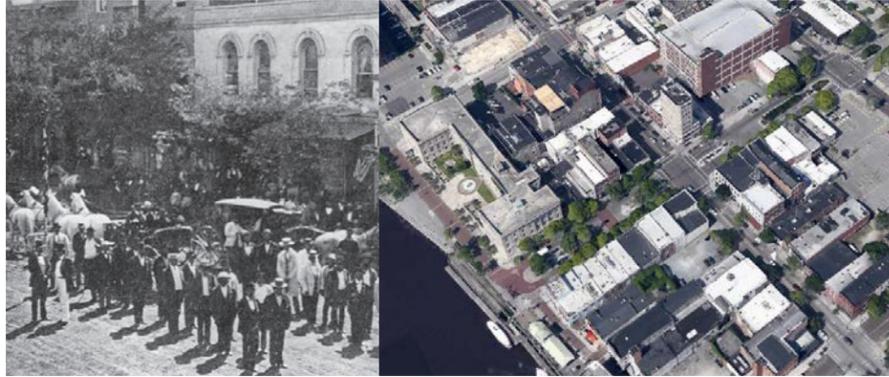


1.2 Growth by Transportation

The shape, size, look and feel of the city, or its development pattern, is the result of dominant modes of transportation used throughout its history. The development and evolution of Wilmington's urban form can be divided into four distinct periods based upon the predominant form of mobility used at the time and other significant city-building investments. Each of these periods has a different design focus that changes the orientation of development and the resulting experience of place.

Foot, Boat, and Horse (circa 1739 - 1892)

Wilmington began as a port city, focused on maritime transportation, horse and carriage, and traveling on foot.



Streetcar (circa 1892 - 1940)

By 1900, the city contained a robust network of streetcars, mass-transit running along rails in the middle of the street. Development along these lines maintained a grid street pattern to accommodate pedestrians.



Historic Streetcar Network

 8.4
Document Cross-Reference:
Community Pattern Areas

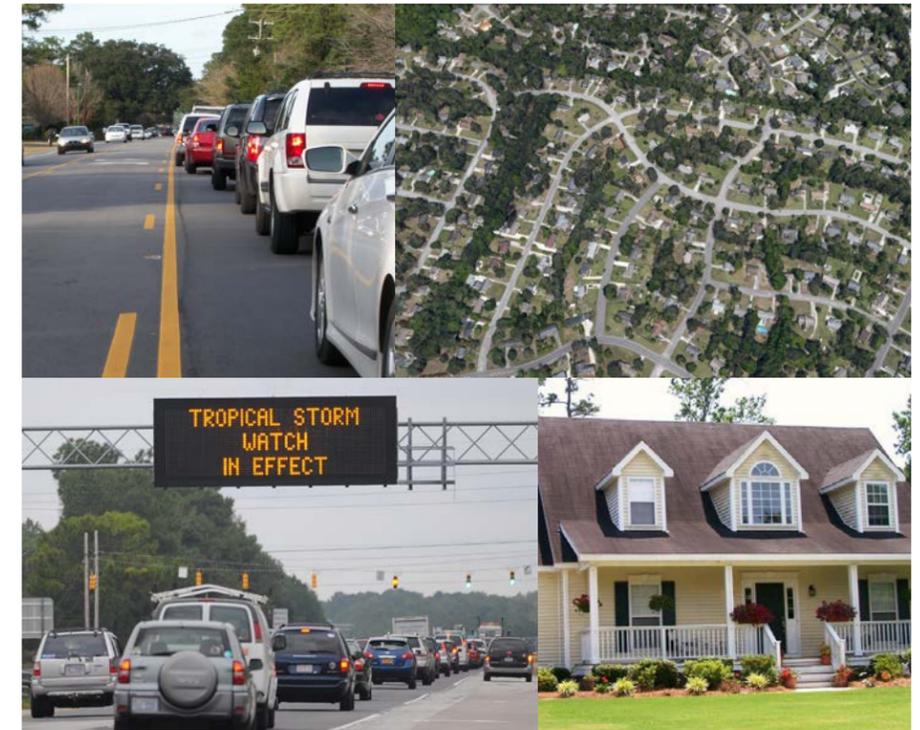
Shipbuilding & State Port (circa 1918 - 1945)

World War II and the relocation of the state port in mid-1900s fueled a development boom south of Greater Downtown.

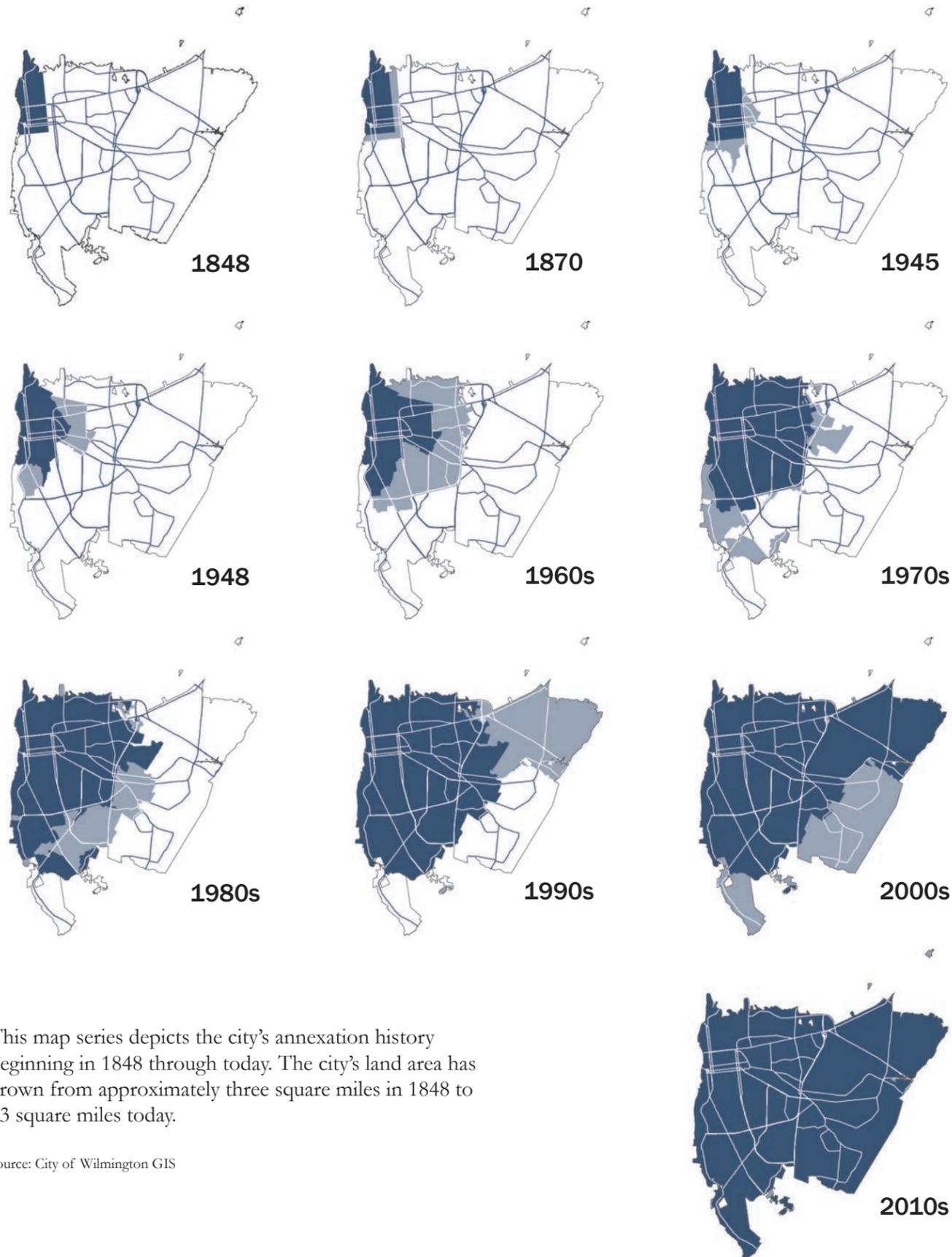


Post-war & I-40 (circa 1945 - Present)

The rapid growth of the region and continued automobile dependency manifests itself into an urban form characterized by wide streets, high volumes of traffic, large parking areas, limited pedestrian spaces, spread out, low-density development, and expansive suburbs.



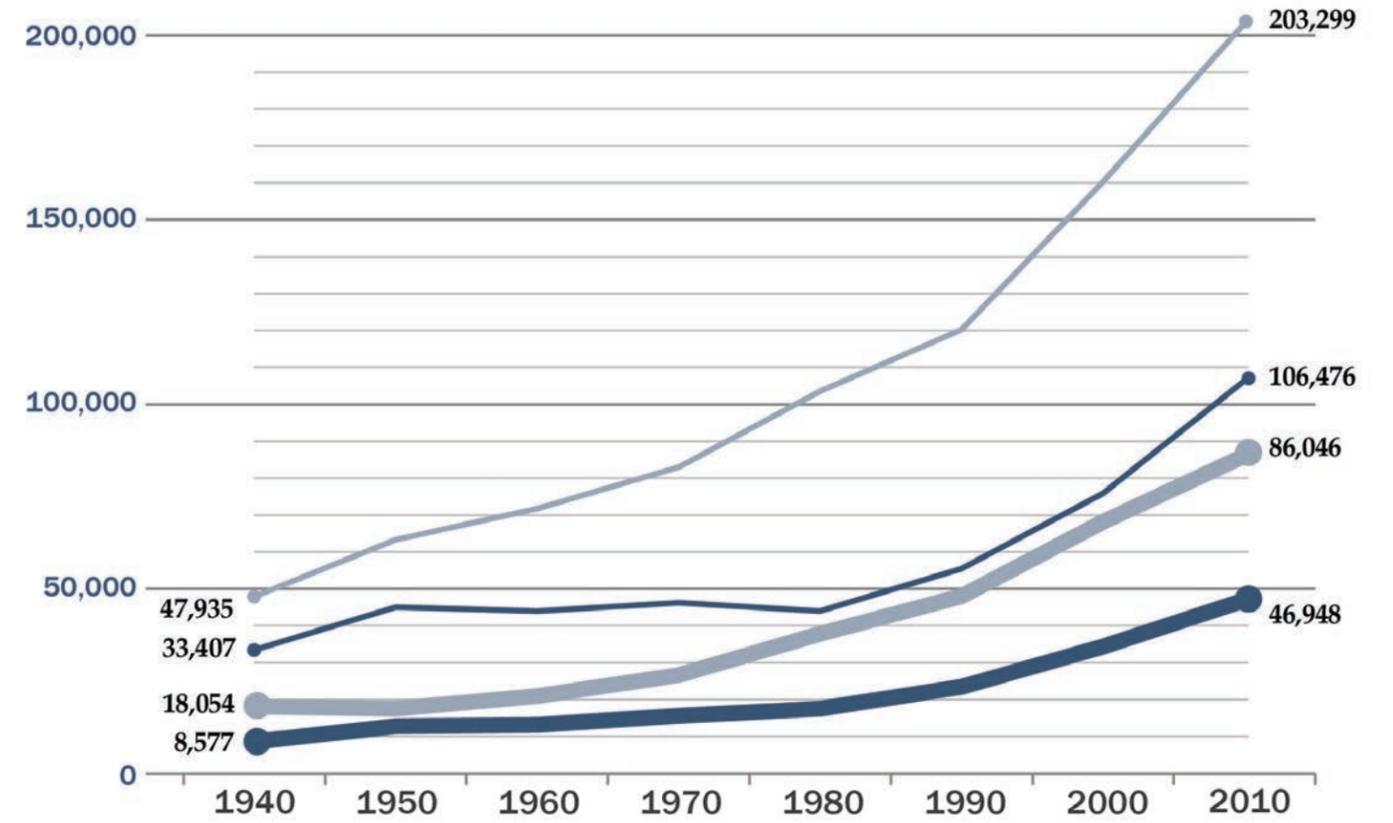
1.3 Growth by Annexation



This map series depicts the city's annexation history beginning in 1848 through today. The city's land area has grown from approximately three square miles in 1848 to 53 square miles today.

Source: City of Wilmington GIS

1.4 Growth Trends by Decennial Census

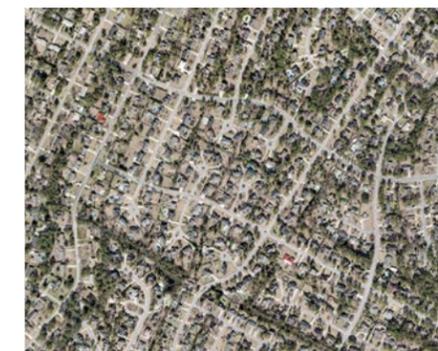


Historic Population and Household Growth
Wilmington & New Hanover County
1940-2010 U.S. Census

Wilmington's population has more than tripled since 1940. The biggest increase was seen after the completion of Interstate 40 in 1990 and following two major annexations in 1995 and 1998. Wilmington has added almost 40,000 households since 1940, particularly after 1990.

Population
— Wilmington
— New Hanover County

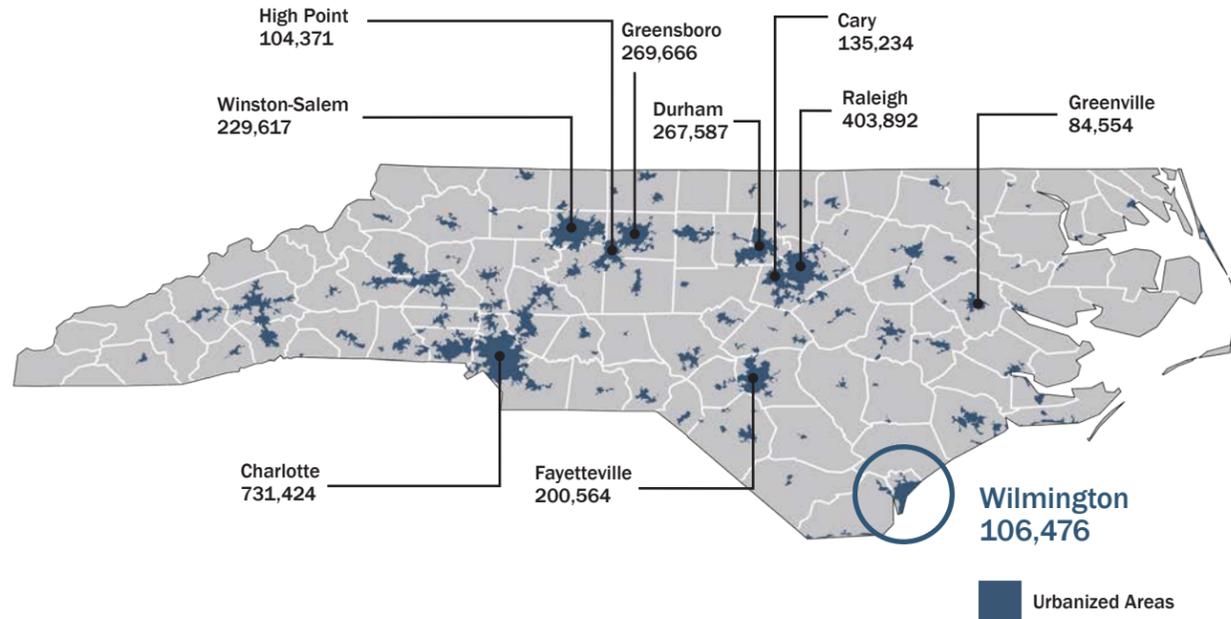
Households
■ Wilmington
■ New Hanover County



1.5 Growth in Context

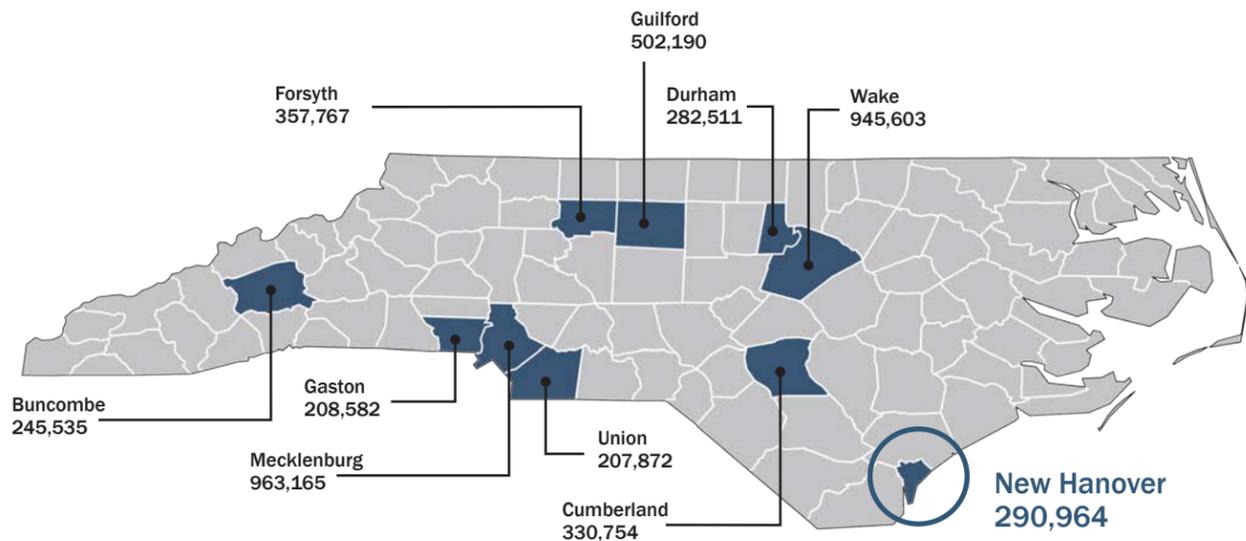
Top 10 Most Populated Cities in North Carolina (2010, U.S. Census)

Of the 10 most populated North Carolina cities, Wilmington ranks 8th in total population.



Top 10 Most Populated Counties in North Carolina (2010, U.S. Census)

Of the 10 most populated North Carolina counties, New Hanover ranks 8th in total population. This report compares various factors among these top 10 counties.



1.6 Population Projections

Population Projections City, County, & Region 2010-2040

The population of New Hanover County, including Wilmington, is expected to increase by 56% between 2010 and the year 2040, nearly double the rate of North Carolina as a whole.

Three-county Region

It is estimated that the combined population of Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender counties will reach nearly 688,000 residents by the year 2040, an increase of over 300,000 residents.

New Hanover County

It is estimated that New Hanover County's population will reach almost 317,000 residents by the year 2040, an increase of over 100,000 residents between 2010 and 2040.

City of Wilmington

It is estimated that Wilmington's population will surpass 166,000 residents by the year 2040, an increase of nearly 60,000 residents, between 2010 and 2040.

North Carolina

It is estimated that North Carolina's population will reach nearly 12.8 million residents by the year 2040, an increase of over 3.2 million residents.

