



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.

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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.

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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.

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

Table of Contents

1	Wilmington’s Growth	4	Land Use, Zoning, & Development Potential	8	Community Patterns	
1.1	Growth in Population	Land Use & Zoning	4.1	Current Land Use	8.1	Historic Urban Center
1.2	Growth by Transportation	4.2	Current Zoning	8.2	Traditional Urban Neighborhoods	
1.3	Growth by Annexation	4.3	Rezoning History & Trends	8.3	Traditional Shopfront Corridors	
1.4	Growth Trends by Decennial Census	Development & Redevelopment Factors	4.4	Building Footprints & Unbuilt Areas	8.4	Streetcar-era Suburbs
1.5	Growth in Context	4.5	Vacant & Buildable Land	8.5	Assorted Semi-urban Fabric	
1.6	Population Projections	4.6	Land Values	8.6	Second-ring Suburbs	
2	Social & Economic Conditions	4.7	Areas of Potential Redevelopment	8.7	Postwar Ranch & Late-century Suburbs	
Demographics		4.8	Developable Land & Redevelopment Sites Combined	8.8	General Contemporary Suburbs	
2.1	Population Density	4.9	Historic Districts & Sites	8.9	Compact Clustered Suburbs	
2.2	Wilmington Neighborhoods	4.10	Brownfields	8.10	Waterfront-oriented Suburbs	
2.3	Population Characteristics			8.11	Intracoastal Tidewater Estates	
Community Health				8.12	Semi-rural Areas	
2.4	Community Health Indicators			8.13	Semi-urban Multi-family Development	
2.5	Active Transportation			8.14	Mid-century Standardized Housing	
Food & Nutrition		5	Public Property, Facilities, & Services	8.15	Automobile-oriented Commercial Strips	
2.6	Healthy Food Options	5.1	Public Property	8.16	Suburban Office & Business Areas	
2.7	Access to Food Stores	5.2	Parks & Open Spaces	8.17	Suburban Commercial Centers	
Schools		5.3	Public Recreation	8.18	Neo-traditional Suburban Town Centers	
2.8	Schools in the City	5.4	Public Safety Infrastructure - Police	8.19	Neighborhood Industrial Transition Areas	
2.9	School Enrollment	5.5	Public Safety Infrastructure - Fire & EMS	8.20	Hospital & Medical Office Transition Area	
2.10	Elementary Schools	5.6	Water Supply	8.21	Large-scale Industrial Areas	
2.11	Middle Schools	5.7	Wastewater Treatment	8.22	Academic/Institutional Campus	
2.12	High Schools					
2.13	School Performance					
2.14	Educational Attainment					
Economy		6	Housing			
2.15	Income	6.1	Housing Overview			
2.16	Employment	6.2	Public & Assisted Housing			
2.17	Tourism	6.3	Housing Affordability			
2.18	Tax Revenues					
2.19	State Port					
3	Natural Resources	7	Transportation			
3.1	Water & Wetlands	7.1	Roadway Network			
3.2	Watersheds	7.2	Traffic Volumes			
3.3	Flood Zones	7.3	State, City, & Private Streets			
3.4	Environmental Assets	7.4	Gateways & Scenic Corridors			
3.5	Water Access	7.5	Parking			
		7.6	Sidewalks & Bike Facilities			
		7.7	Bicycle & Pedestrian Crashes			
		7.8	Transit			
				9	Downtown Framework	
				9.1	Downtown in Context	
				9.2	Four Parts of Greater Downtown	

3 Natural Resources

- 3.1 Water & Wetlands
- 3.2 Watersheds
- 3.3 Flood Zones
- 3.4 Environmental Assets
- 3.5 Water Access

3.1 Water & Wetlands

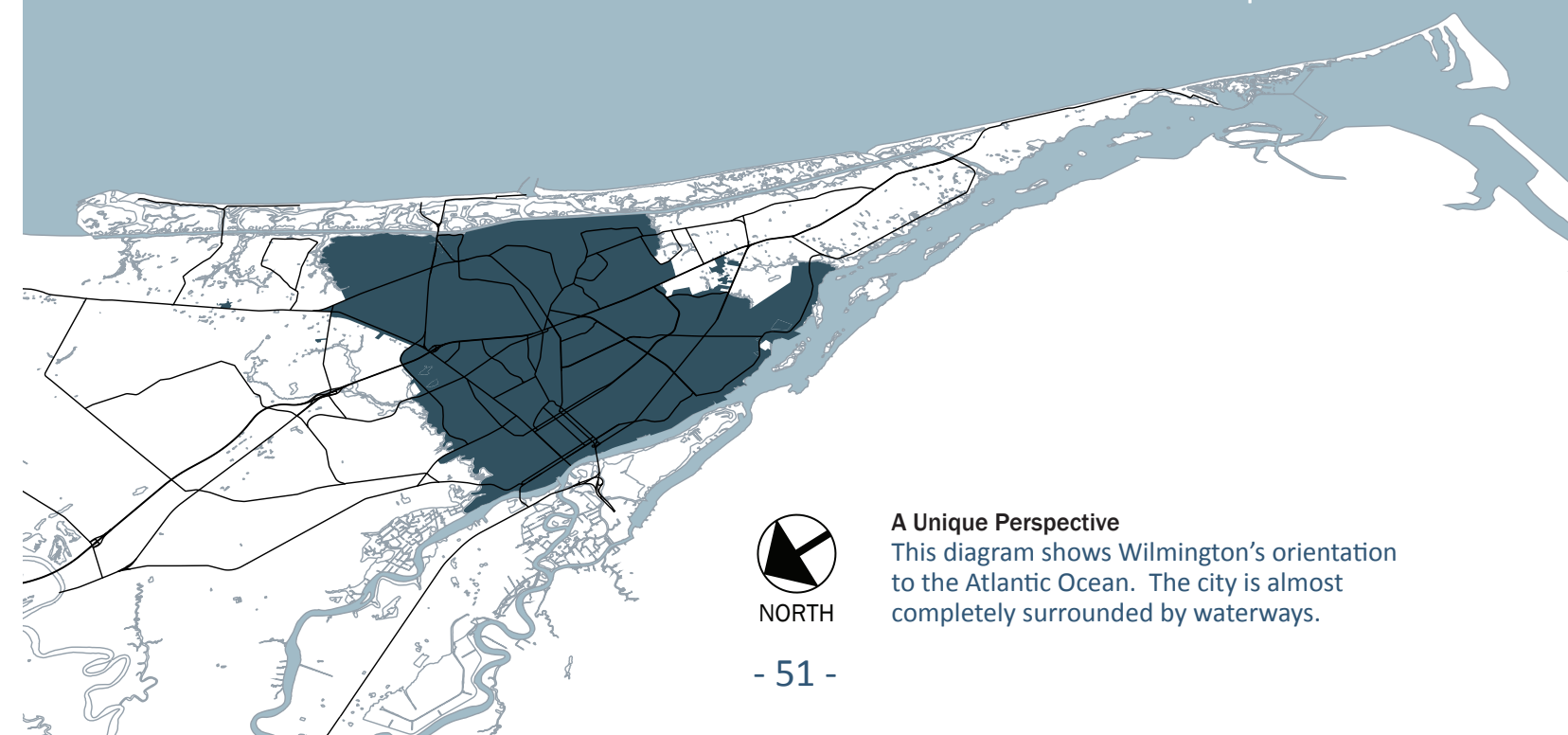
Water plays an important role in our way of life, as Wilmington is bordered by both the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. There are also a number of tidal creeks and natural and man made lakes and ponds found across the city.

Wetlands are a critical component of our water resources, as they remove pollutants from stormwater runoff, feed downstream systems, recharge groundwater supplies, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Wetlands may include a swamp, marsh, or bog and can vary greatly due to differences in soils, hydrology, water chemistry, and vegetation.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

“We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one.”

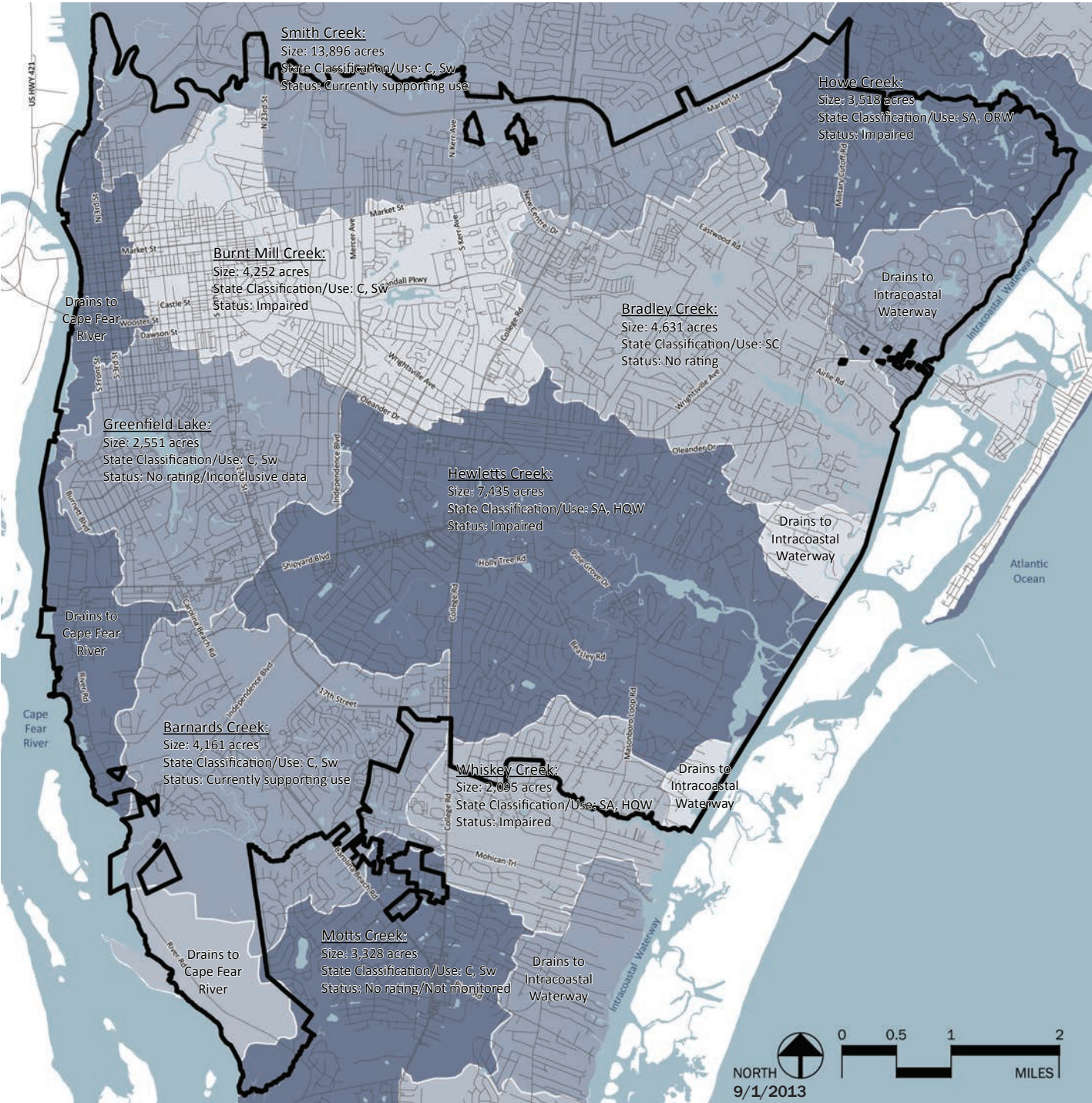
— Jacques Cousteau



A Unique Perspective

This diagram shows Wilmington's orientation to the Atlantic Ocean. The city is almost completely surrounded by waterways.

3.2 Watersheds



Waterway Classifications

- C - Fresh water, protected for secondary recreation
- Sw - Swamp waters, low flow, flat topography
- SA - Salt water, used for shellfishing, primary recreation
- SC - Salt water, protected for secondary recreation
- HQW - Salt water, rated excellent for biological, physical and chemical characteristics
- ORW - Salt water, excellent water quality, national, ecological, recreational significance

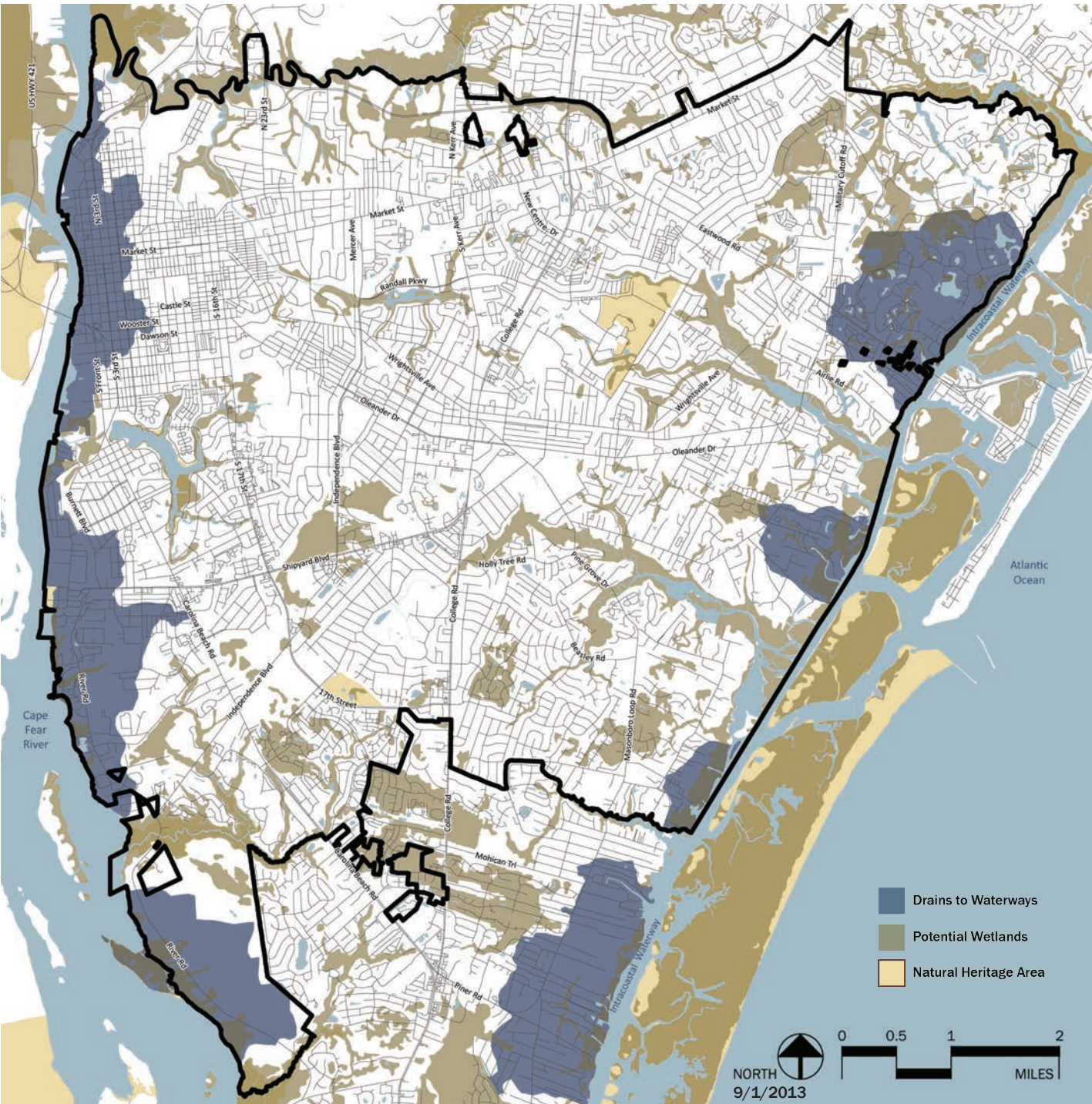
3.3 Flood Zones



This map depicts the flood zones that exist at various locations in the city. Flood zones are areas identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as being vulnerable to varying levels of risk. A flood zone is the area adjacent to a waterway that has been or may be covered by flood waters. A floodway is the channel of a waterway and parts of the adjacent floodplain that are reasonably required to carry the

flood water of the waterway. There are approximately 1,359 acres of vacant land within the 100-year flood zone and an additional 188 acres of vacant land within the 500-year flood zone. A 100-year flood is an event that has a one percent probability of occurring in any given year, a 500-year flood is an event that has a 0.2% chance of occurring in any given year.

3.4 Environmental Assets



This map identifies various environmental assets and/or constraints located across the city, including watersheds draining to coastal waters and the Cape Fear River. It also identifies potential wetlands and significant natural heritage areas. Significant natural heritage areas are sites of special biodiversity significance. An area’s significance may be due to the

presence of rare species, exemplary or unique natural communities, important animal assemblages, or other important ecological features. Examples of significant natural heritage areas in the city include the Alderman Nature Preserve, Greenfield Lake, and the UNCW Longleaf Pine Forest.

3.5 Water Access



This map depicts locations where access to navigable water bodies is available to the public. The city maintains three public water access sites: one on the Cape Fear River (Dram Tree Park), one on a tributary to Smith Creek (Archie Blue Park), and one at Greenfield Lake. The city currently has over seven miles of frontage along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway with no public water access.