



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
- 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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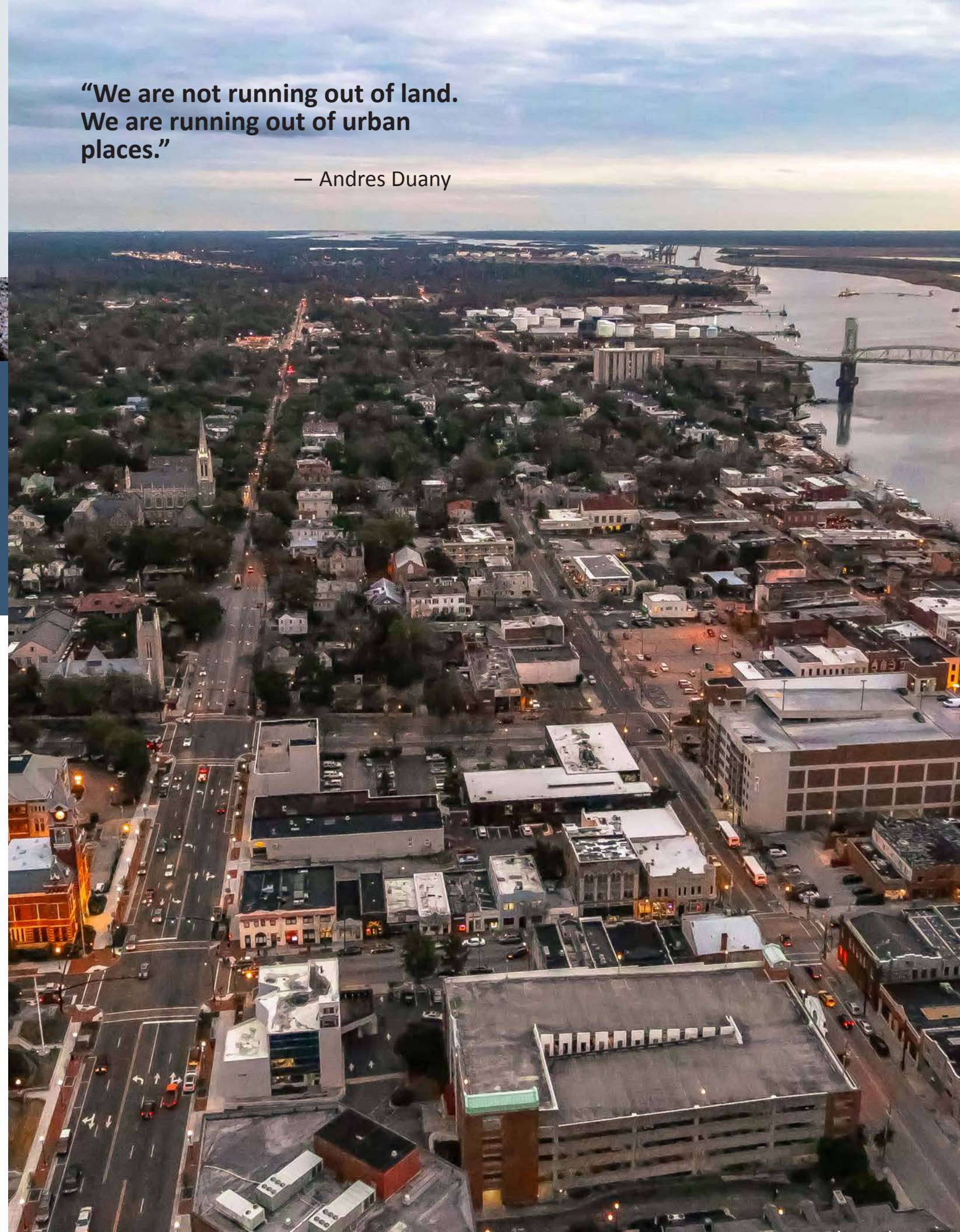


9 Downtown Framework

- 9.1 Downtown In Context
- 9.2 Four Parts of Greater Downtown

**“We are not running out of land.
We are running out of urban
places.”**

— Andres Duany



Introduction

This analysis provides an overview of downtown from a geographic and urban design perspective. The primary purpose is to define a workable framework for the Comprehensive Plan and identify issues for further planning. This section may also prove useful as the city goes about the process of replacing its outdated land development code. Variables of analysis are selective and not exhaustive.



City Market on Water Street



SW corner of S. 5th Avenue and Castle Street



N. 4th Street



NE corner of Front and Grace streets



Vendors on Front Street



Cape Fear River



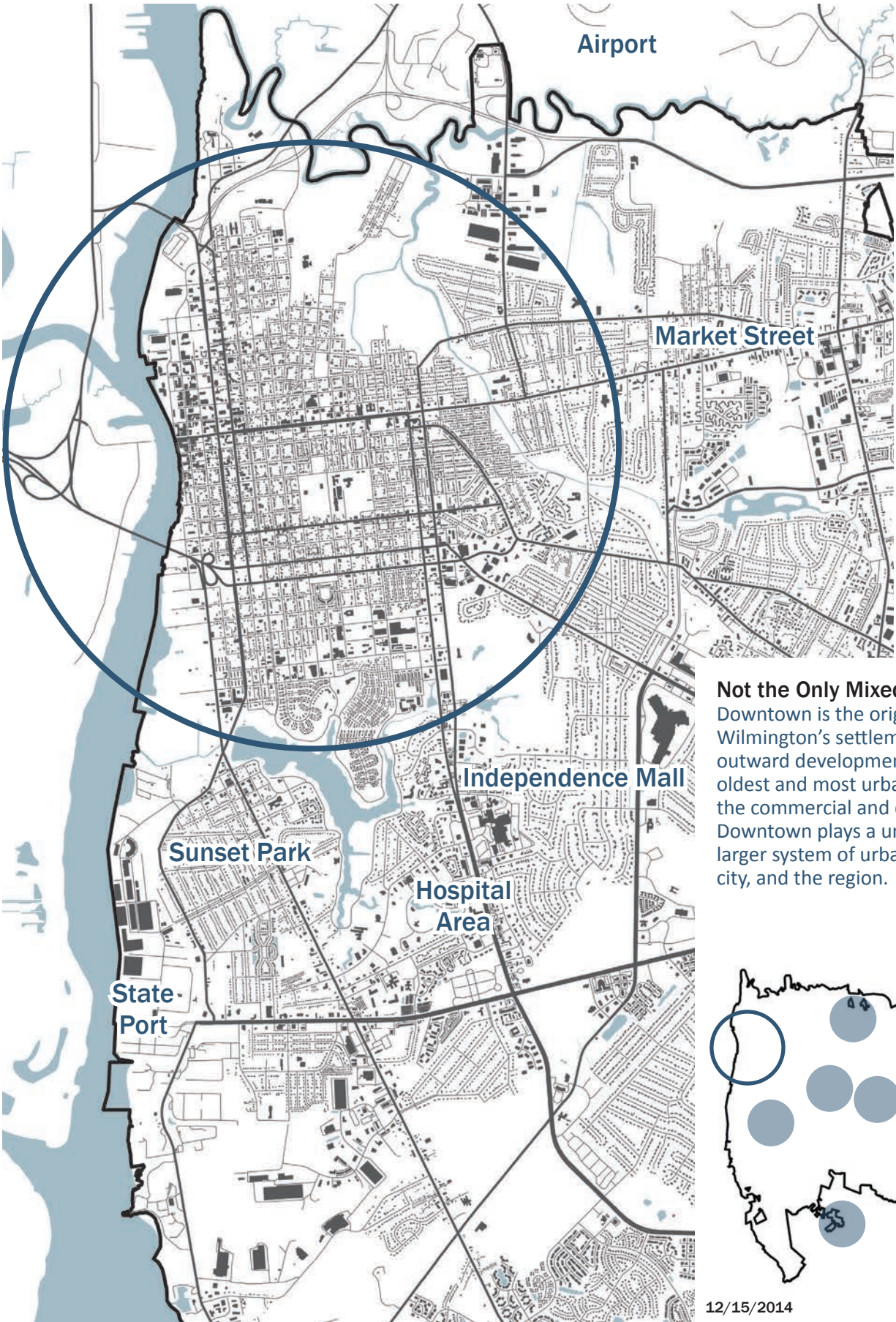
Front Street

What is Downtown?

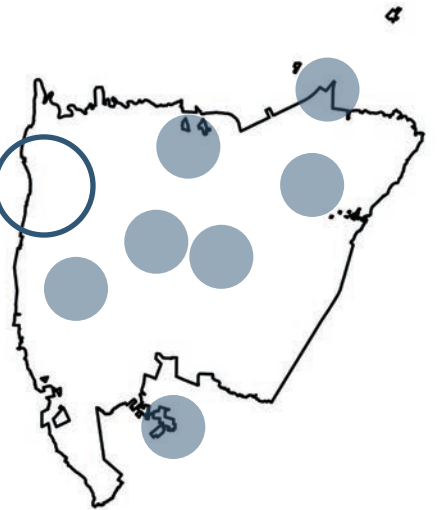
The word “downtown” has multiple meanings to different people. This analysis attempts to give distinct boundaries to downtown in order to provide a useful planning framework. There are four parts of Greater Downtown:

- 1. Downtown Core
- 2. Northside
- 3. Southside
- 4. Eastern Streetcar-era Suburbs

9.1 Downtown in Context



Not the Only Mixed-use Center
Downtown is the origin of Wilmington’s settlement and outward development. As the city’s oldest and most urban place, it is the commercial and civic center. Downtown plays a unique role in a larger system of urban centers in the city, and the region.



12/15/2014

9.2 Four Parts of Greater Downtown

There are four main geographic areas that make up the Greater Downtown (the area of Wilmington roughly defined by the 1945 Corporate Limits). These boundaries are intended to provide structure for planning efforts and promote a sense of identity through a commonly agreed-upon delineation of geographic areas.



Northern downtown riverfront



External Resource:
Defining Downtown



Box Set Cross-Reference:
The Foundations Report
provides information on
all plans mentioned in
this chapter.

Minor and Major Gateways

Gateways are points of transition into, and out of, a specific area. The physical environment of these locations provide people with a sense of this change in place. They can be accentuated by physical features such as bridges, tree-lined streets, groups of tall buildings, and signage.

Major gateways handle large amounts of traffic and are significantly sized areas where transition from one place to another occurs. Minor gateways are smaller in scale and regional significance, but they provide important local transition points.

- 1

Downtown Core
(Central Business District & Surroundings)

This is the general study area of the Vision 2020: A Waterfront Downtown plan, created in 1997, as well as the planned extent of the Cape Fear Riverwalk. Much of the area between the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge and the Isabel Holmes Memorial Bridge is zoned, and often commonly referred to, as the Central Business District (CBD), and is zoned as such. This is the most urban condition in the city in terms of density, scale, and character. The Downtown Core is composed of several distinct sub-districts (also called “urban places” or “urban neighborhoods”).
- 2

Northside

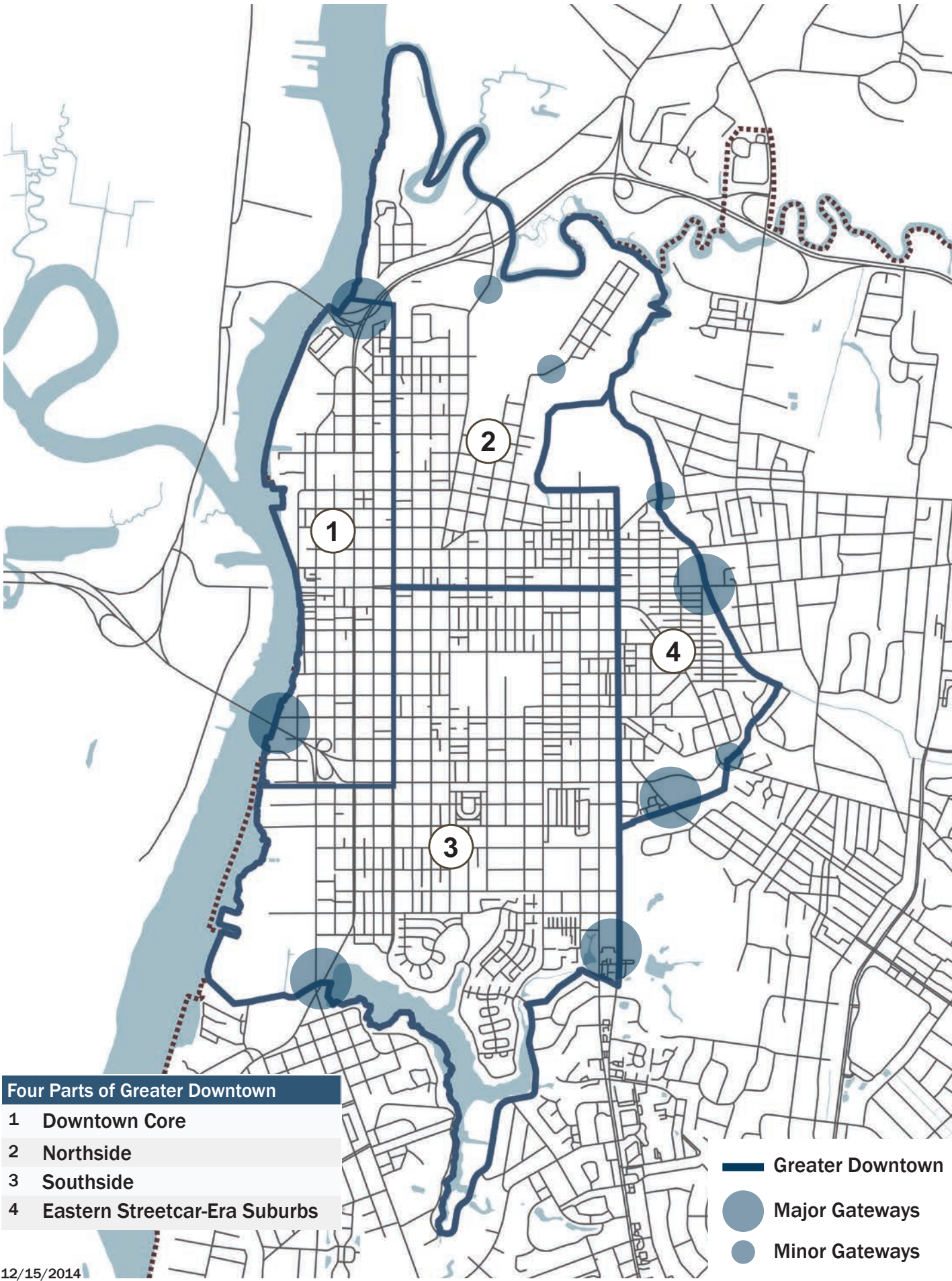
The Northside community consists of neighborhoods that have not realized the same modern day economic growth as other areas in the city. This area is architecturally and historically significant for Wilmington because it depicts the character of a mid-nineteenth to early twentieth-century neighborhood that was home to factory, dock, and railroad workers. The railroad track is not being utilized and creates both obstacles and opportunities for the community.
- 3

Southside

The area south of Market Street has experienced some revitalization in recent years, most notably on Castle Street and the conversion of a public housing development to market rate apartments (South Front). Remaining challenges include: the presence of three large public housing complexes, high vacancy and crime rates, an abundance of derelict postindustrial sites, and numerous physical barriers to the Cape Fear River, commercial services, and adjacent neighborhoods.
- 4

Eastern Streetcar-Era Suburbs

In terms of urban form, these historic streetcar-era neighborhoods are slightly modified extensions of the downtown’s street grid. Improvements to 17th Street will help “thread” this area into the Greater Downtown geography. Though this is a distinct area, the eastern edge represents a more appropriate boundary for the Greater Downtown than does 17th Street.



This is the end of the Growth Factors Report. Please refer to other components of the Comprehensive Plan for more information and decision-making guidance.

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