



CREATE WILMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Foundations 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 Box Set

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.

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.

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
- Densityfication
- 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

Foundations Report

This report is produced as a part of the overall comprehensive plan development process and is meant to highlight factors that formed the foundation of the policies and maps spelled out in the plan. A major component of this process is the input of the Wilmington community, but several other factors also helped shape the plan’s policy components, including best practices, growth factors and trends, and projected demographic changes. This chapter serves as a guide to the community input received from residents, students, professionals, and organizations throughout the listening phase of the comprehensive plan. In addition

to providing a map through the public input process, this document is also intended to help enhance and continue the discussion of planning issues in Wilmington by sharing the viewpoints collected.

This report is composed of three parts: a summary of the community input collected, an outline of the city’s legacy planning documents, and a detailed analysis of the 12 Neighborhood Planning Areas. The raw data from the various input collection tools is available on the city’s website wilmingtonnc.gov.

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

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Building on Foundations (About This Report)

Wilmington is a historic and dynamic coastal city. Wilmington has many treasured neighborhoods, an extensive historic district, a vibrant downtown, thriving commercial centers, a growing population. Wilmington is also nearly built out, so there are special challenges when it comes to accommodating new growth, redevelopment, and infill.

The community has shaped the vision for the future of Wilmington: residents aspire to be a safe community that is inclusive and affordable, maintains its unique character, fosters a healthy economy and healthy citizens, and remains an attractive place to live, work, and play.

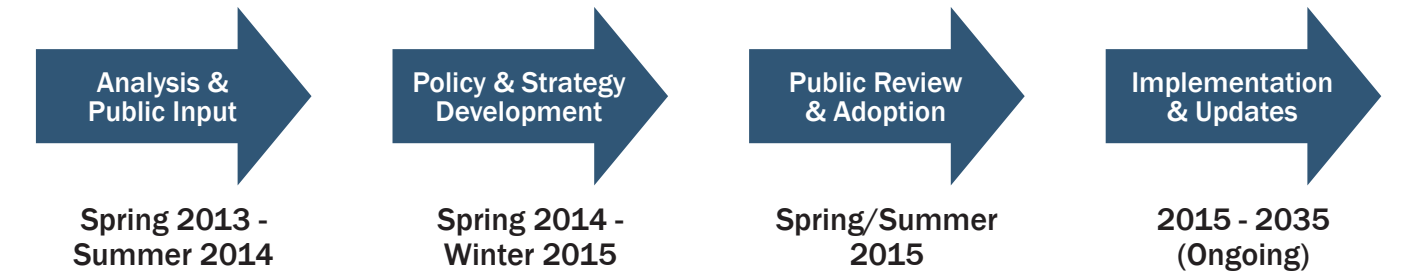
Rapid growth, coupled with outdated growth policies and development regulations present both challenges and opportunities. In 2013, the city began the process of establishing a vision of what kind of city residents want to have 20 to 25 years from now. This multi-year process was to lead to not only the creation and adoption of a city-wide comprehensive plan, but also a total reconsideration of the city’s growth management system. Foremost among these following activities will be the replacement of the city’s antiquated land development code.

The *Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan* lays out a path toward achieving the vision of a thriving, healthy city that responds to the pressures and demands that come with being a modern, dynamic city. The *Create Wilmington* process kicked off with a

city-wide meeting, as the plan is rooted in listening and understanding issues that impact citizens’ everyday lives. This meeting set the tone for future conversations, where participants worked to identify what is working well, where there is room for improvement, and what their big dreams for Wilmington are. This process was grounded in the idea of meeting people where they are – not only in terms of how they like to participate, be it in person, online, or traditional public meetings – but also in terms of understanding what people value about their community. The process was also a two-way street, in that meetings were also intended to show citizens how comprehensive planning can benefit them, their neighborhoods, and future generations of Wilmingtonians.

Create Wilmington is a multi-year process that includes the development of the comprehensive plan followed by the re-envisioning of the city’s land development code. This report, therefore, is not the end of the public input process. Rather, it is a report on the input collected to date, that which has helped shape the comprehensive plan’s policies and growth strategies, a transparent look at the guiding voice of the community. More conversations will follow, and citizens will again be called on to participate in the conversation, both through the land development code rewrite and the supplemental neighborhood and small area plans that will follow.

Planning Process



"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

— Antoine de Saint-Exupery

3 Policy Audit & Legacy Planning Documents

- 3.1 Regional Plans
- 3.2 Small-area & Corridor Plans
- 3.3 Future Land Use Plan
- 3.4 Function-related Plans
- 3.5 Master Plans

To understand where the planning process began, it was necessary to first understand what planning efforts had already taken place. The city’s first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1945, and a lot has changed since then; it is critical to understand how, why, and where Wilmington has changed and developed over the past 70 years since that first plan was prepared. Plans are typically based on wide-ranging public input, so understanding these older plans and recognizing the public input that went into the development of these plans is an important part of the Create Wilmington process.

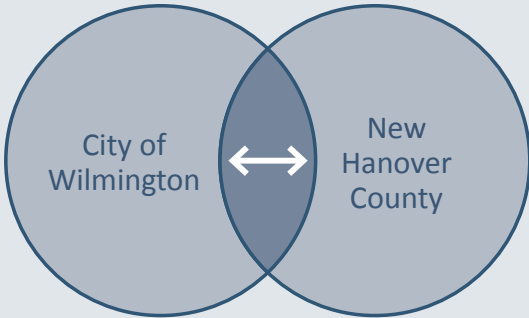
To chart the path forward, a comprehensive review of all past planning documents was conducted. This “policy audit” compared previous plans, identified gaps and overlaps, and areas where additional planning and implementation has not been previously addressed. Hundreds of policies were consolidated into a single spreadsheet, and this information was used to inform the policies and maps found within the comprehensive plan.

The policy audit included the plans considered to be currently active, that is, plans that have been adopted by the City Council, which have not been updated or replaced by a newer plan, or that are in regular use by a department within the city. Included are the individual departmental work plans, neighborhood and small-area plans, city-wide plans, and the City Council’s Strategic Plan. Several of these plans are referenced within the comprehensive plan, and the policy recommendations in these planning documents will continue to be implemented.

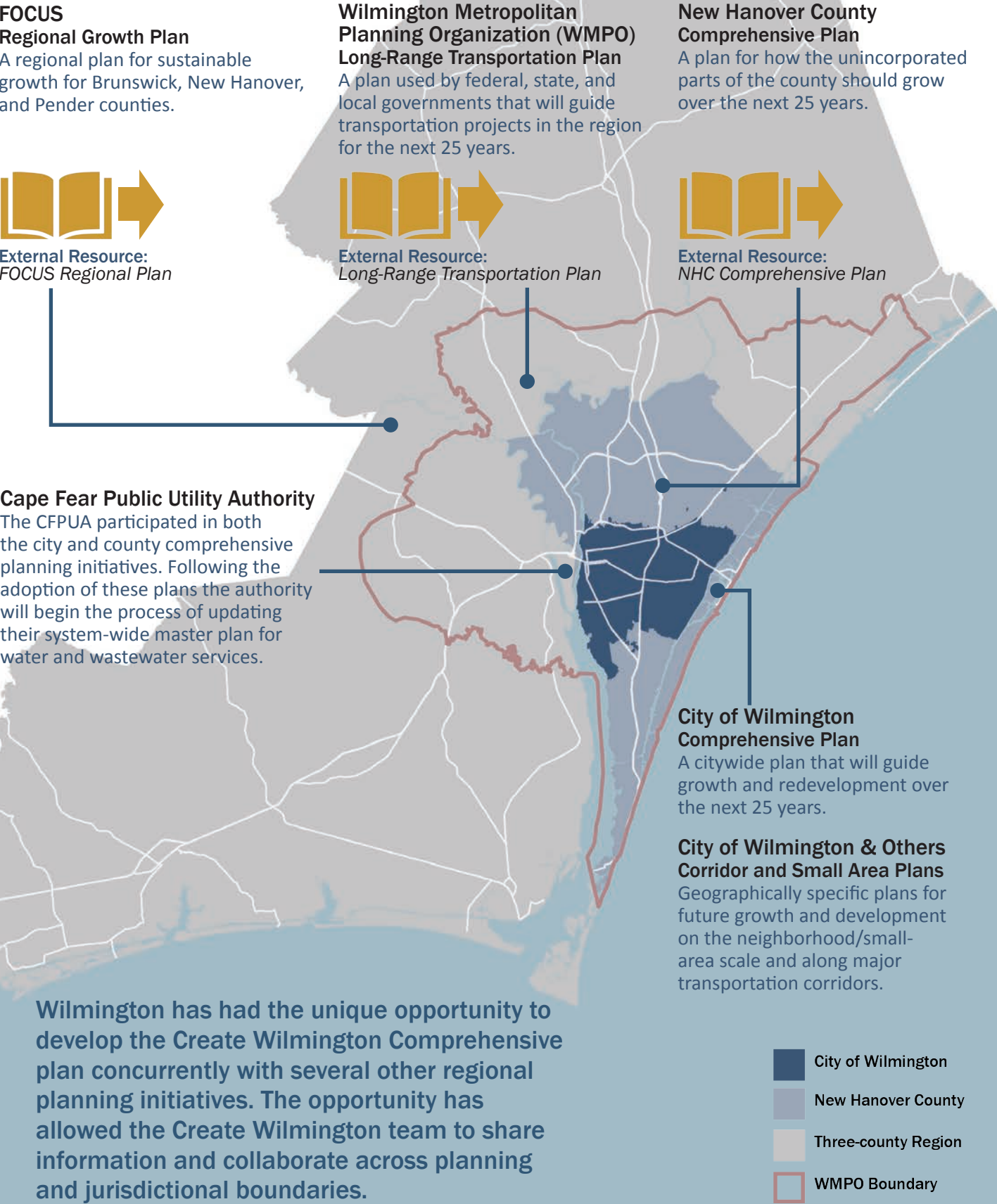
The 2004 Future Land Use Plan, the most recent long-range planning document adopted by the city, will be replaced by the Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Collaboration

Members of the Create Wilmington team participated in each of New Hanover County’s theme committee meetings, which allowed the Create Wilmington team to not only share the citizen input that had been collected through the Create Wilmington process and use it to help shape the county’s plan, but also to share in the collection of feedback through the county’s process. The goal of this collaboration is for the city and the county to have two separate but coordinated plans.



3.1 Regional Plans



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2
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1
2
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3.2 Small-area & Corridor Plans

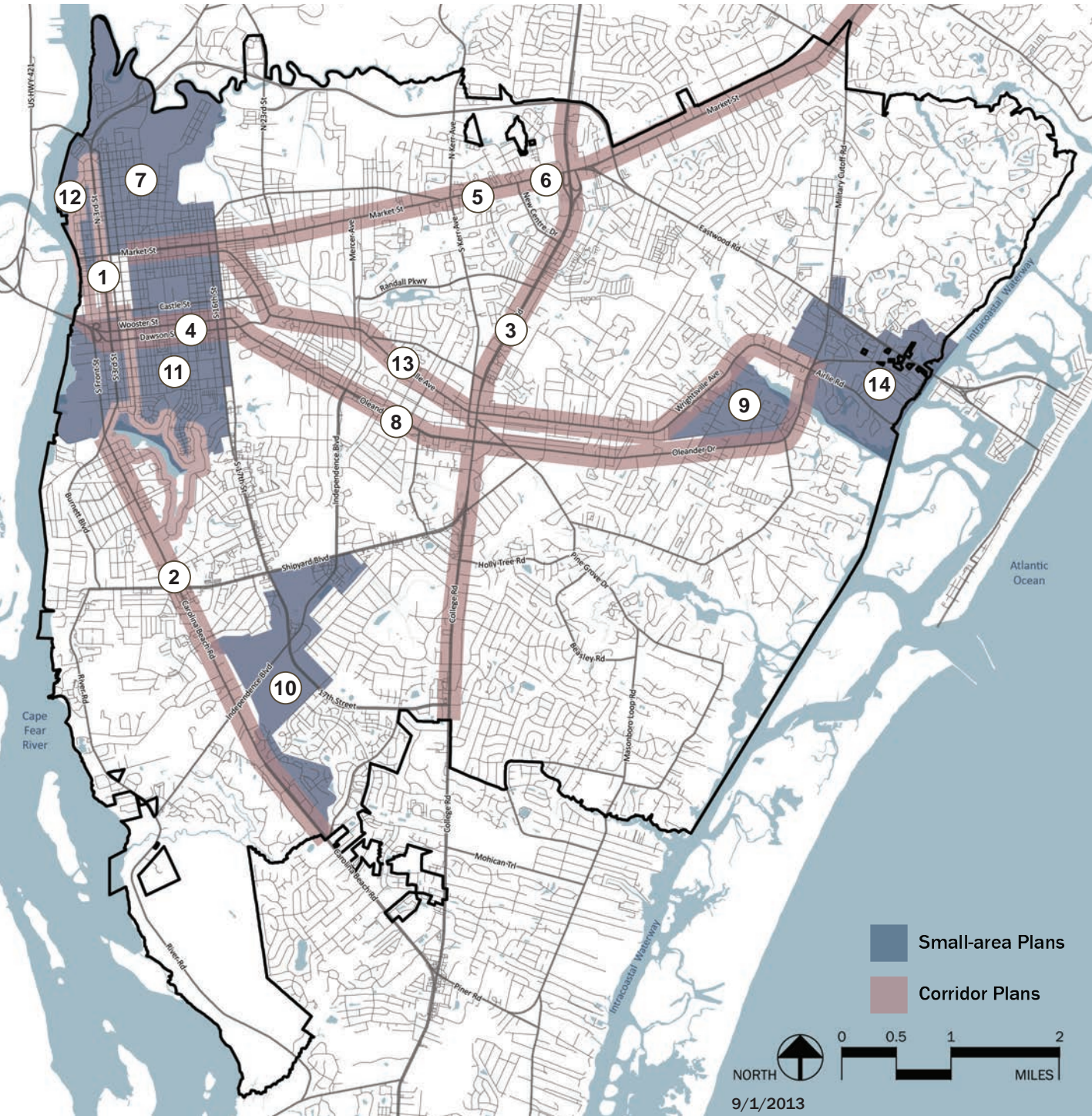
There are a number of neighborhood, small-area, and corridor plans that address a small geographic area of the city or a specific roadway. Each of these plans are currently being implemented and will continue to supplement the city’s comprehensive planning efforts. Neighborhood plans, as the name implies, are plans crafted by and for a specific neighborhood that speak to the unique characteristics and desires of that neighborhood. Small-area plans address an area of town that has a larger geographic boundary than a neighborhood plan and may include a collection of neighborhoods with similar characteristics. Corridor plans are developed for individual road corridors that address the unique characteristics of the road itself and the development along it.



External Resource:
A link to each of these plans is provided on the City of Wilmington’s website.

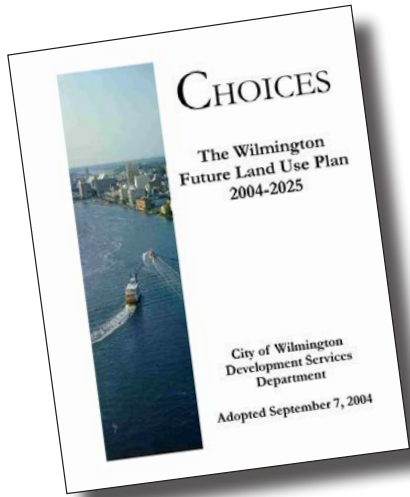
Active Neighborhood, Small-area, & Corridor Plans

1. Cape Fear Historic Byway Management Plan (2008)
2. Carolina Beach Road Corridor Plan (2004)
3. College Road Corridor Plan (2004)
4. Dawson-Wooster Corridor Plan (2007)
5. Market Street Corridor Study (2011)
6. Northside Community Plan (2003)
7. Oleander Drive Corridor Plan (2004)
8. Seagate Neighborhood Plan (2007)
9. South 17th Street Land Use Plan (1996)
10. Southside Small-area Plan (2009)
11. Wilmington Vision 2020: A Waterfront Downtown Plan (1997, 2004)
12. Wrightsville Avenue 2030: Land Use & Transportation Plan (2010)
13. Wrightsville Sound Small-area Plan (2011)

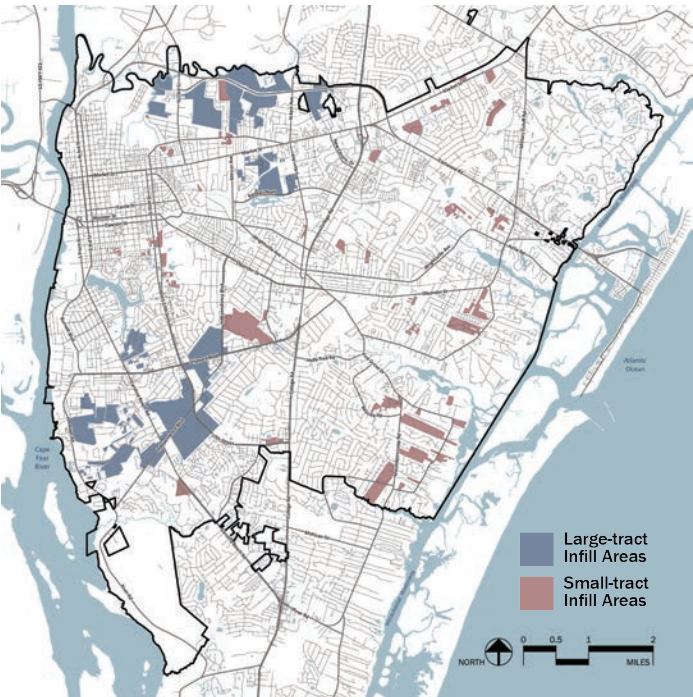


This map depicts the areas of the city for which a small area, neighborhood, or corridor plan has been created and adopted.

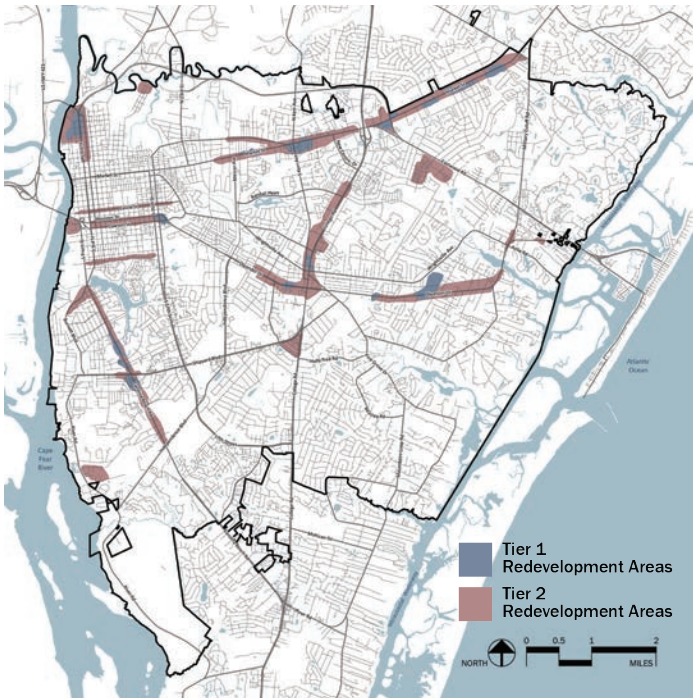
3.3 Future Land Use Plan



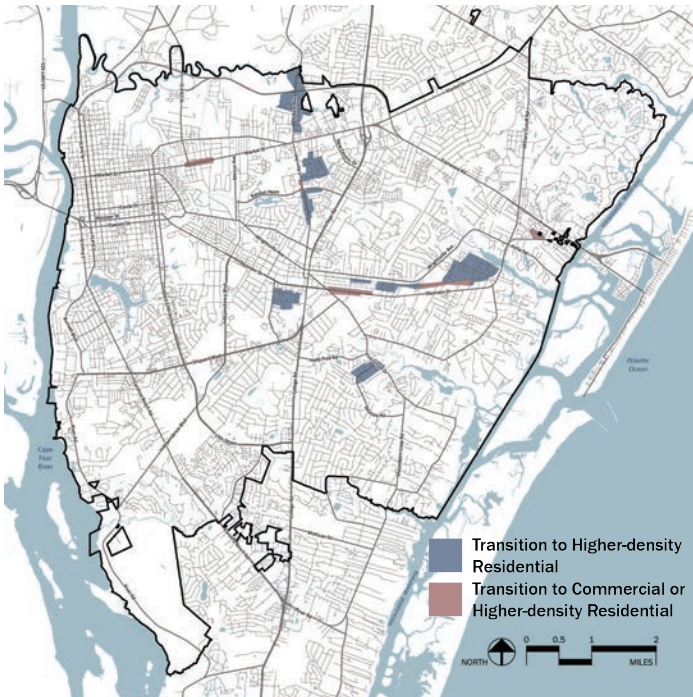
The city’s Future Land Use Plan was adopted by City Council in 2004 and was created to guide the physical development of the city over a 20-year period. The plan is based on three primary development trends that are expected to occur during the plan’s horizon: infill development, redevelopment, and transitioning residential areas. The plan does not cover the entire city, but rather focuses only on particular areas and parcels of land.



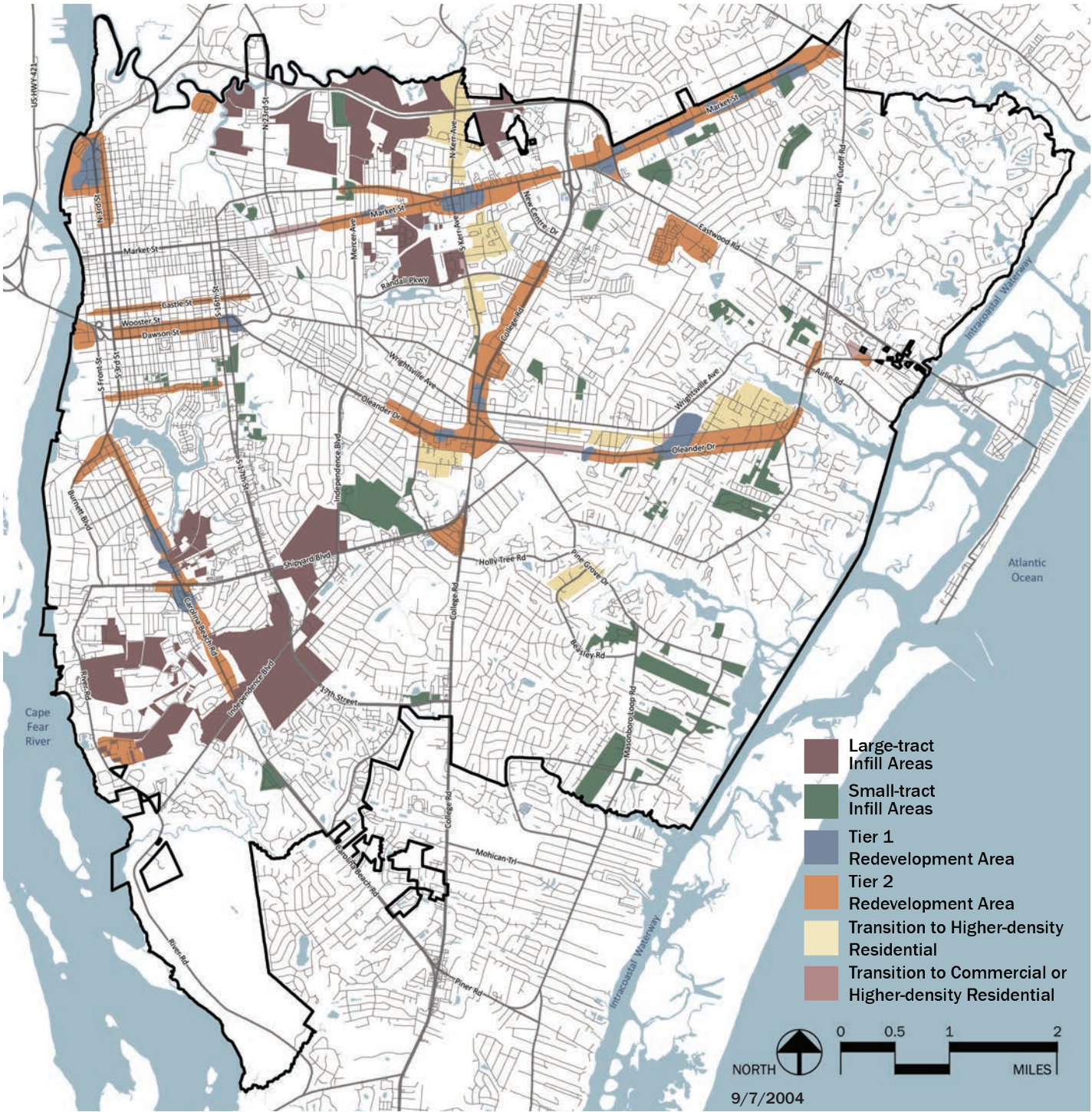
Infill Areas
The plan identifies both large- and small-tract infill areas. Large-tract areas range from 90 to 600 acres in aggregate size while small-tract areas are less than 40 acres.



Redevelopment Areas
The plan identifies two tiers of redevelopment. Tier 1 areas have the greatest need for quality redevelopment and Tier 2 areas represent commercial areas in decline.



Transition Areas
The plan identifies two land use transitions, areas transitioning to higher-density residential uses and areas transitioning from residential to commercial or higher-density residential uses.



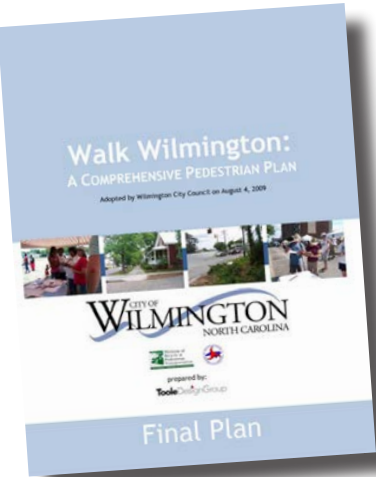
This is the composite Future Land Use Map. The map includes each of the three major components of the Future Land Use Plan: Large- and small-tract infill areas, tier 1 and tier 2 redevelopment areas, and areas that are transitioning to higher-density residential and/or commercial uses. Note that the geometries of the infill areas identified employ a parcel specific level of detail. The *Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan* will not be parcel-specific, thereby avoiding the issue of attempting to predict, with certainty, the use of these land parcels.

3.4 Function-related Plans

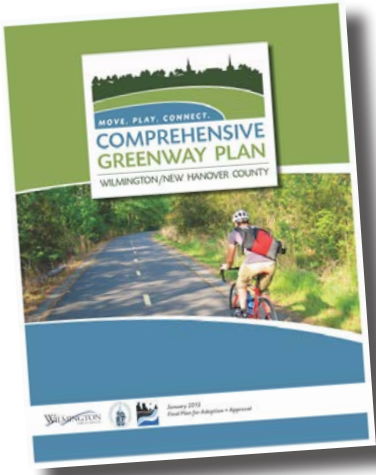
Some plans are developed for a special purpose. These plans typically do not apply to a specific geography, but rather are city- and/or county-wide plans developed around functional infrastructure.



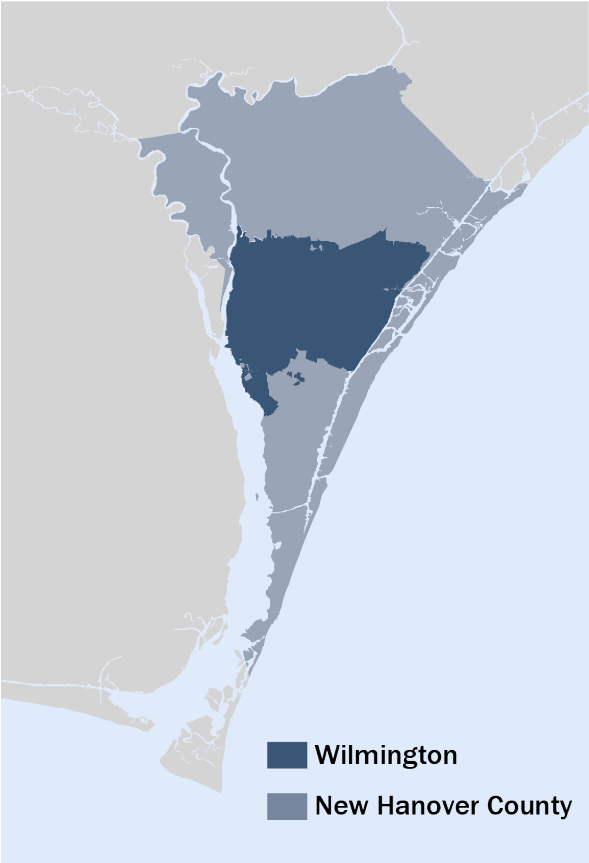
Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan
This plan provides a blueprint and plan of action to guide the future growth and development of the city's parks and recreation system.



Walk Wilmington
This is a comprehensive pedestrian plan that coordinates the effort to develop a safe, accessible, and comfortable pedestrian system throughout the City of Wilmington.



Comprehensive Greenway Plan
This plan provides a framework for local governments and private partners to successfully establish a comprehensive network of greenways throughout Wilmington and New Hanover County.

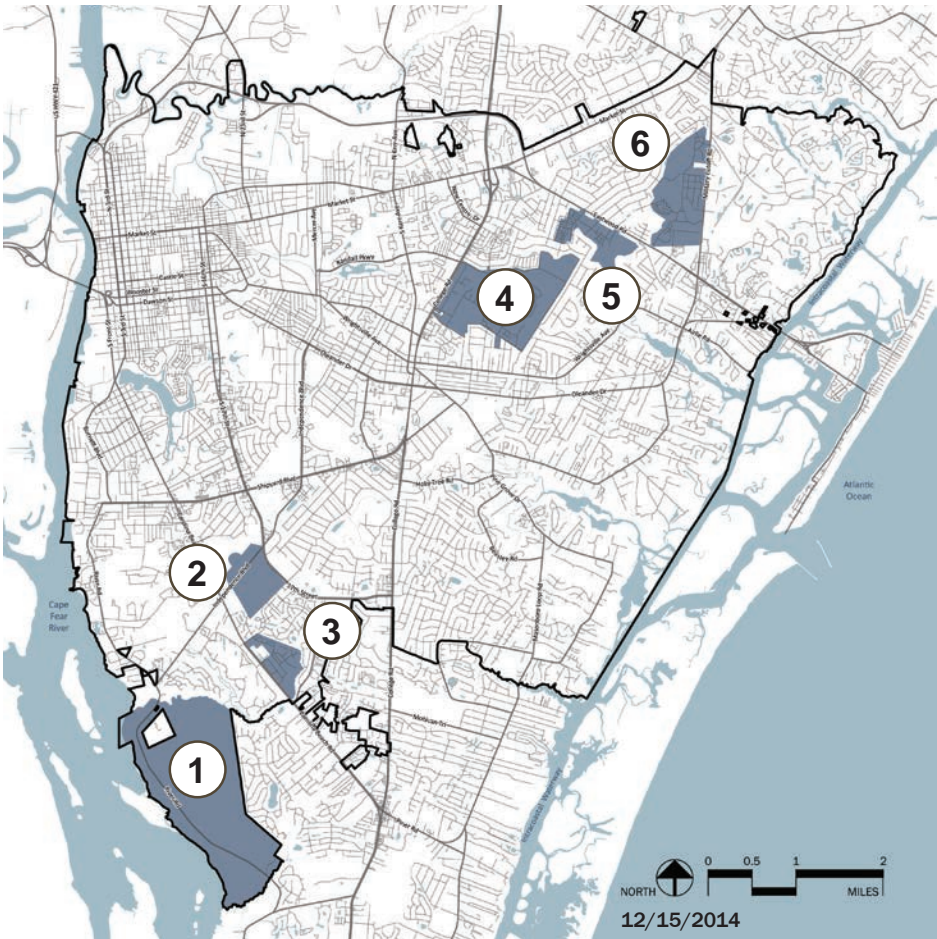


3.5 Master Plans

There are several master-planned sites located across the city that will have a significant impact on how the city will grow over the next 20 to 30 years. The buildout of these sites will require the city to carefully consider what improvements will be needed to accommodate the additional growth in these areas.

Master-planned Sites

- 1. Riverlights
- 2. Barclay West
- 3. Fairfield Park
- 4. UNCW Campus
- 5. Autumn Hall
- 6. Mayfaire



Master Plan Profile: Autumn Hall

Autumn Hall is a master planned community located on Eastwood Road, on the site of the former Duck Haven Golf Course. When built out, the 200-acre site will include a mix of both single- and multi-family residential units, a retirement community and continuing care center, offices, and retail and commercial areas.

1. Residential	6. Carolina Bay Continuing Care Retirement Community	Parks and Amenities	E. Shell Bridge Park
2. Dungannon Village	7. Headwaters Apartments	A. Chapel Park	F. Conservation Area
3. Medical Office Park	8. Future Retail/Commercial	B. Arbor Park	G. Creek Club
4. New Hanover Regional Medical Center	9. Future Residential	C. Edisto Park	H. Bradley Creek
5. Carolina Bay Mansion Flats		D. Pool/Outdoor Kitchen/Bocce Ball	I. Multi-Use Trail
			J. 8-acre Lake

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

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