



*Pride in the Past,  
Faith in the Future*

**2023**

**COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

**WASHINGTON, NC**

**DRAFT**

February 1, 2013

**C L A R I O N**



# City of Washington 2023 Comprehensive Plan

*Pride in the Past, Faith in the Future*

WASHINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

*DRAFT*  
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# Acknowledgements

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# SECTION I: PLAN SUMMARY



## Plan Summary

The City of Washington, North Carolina is a place animated by a sense of unmatched, irreplaceable history, shaped by civic involvement and economic vitality. This is a City of pride and opportunity.

- A. Preface
- B. Community Context
- C. Key Issues and Goals

# A. Preface

Washington, North Carolina. January, 2013.

This 2023 Comprehensive Plan has been prepared for the City of Washington to articulate a vision for the community’s future, and establish a road map for how to achieve that future. This Plan is an update of the community’s last adopted Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Washington City Council in 2006. Washington’s Comprehensive Plan is a strategic document that compiles information, community dialogue, and preferred public policy choices for the City.

This plan provides policy guidance on a variety of complementary community issues, including coordinating growth and infrastructure, highlighting economic development pursuits, and protecting environmental resources. The plan is organized around ten key themes:

- Downtown and the Waterfront
- Economic Development
- Community Appearance
- Historic Preservation
- Tourism and Eco-tourism
- Transportation and Mobility
- Public Services and Facilities
- Commercial Business Districts
  - Housing
- Neighborhoods

This updated Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework, establishing the context for decision-making on projects and helping the community set priorities for action. This Plan suggests priorities for attention and action. The plan both sets forth the long-term vision, and serves as a resource for day-to-day decision-making.



This Comprehensive Plan is organized as follows:

- Section I summarizes the Comprehensive Plan and the City’s vision for its future.
- Section II describes the area and existing conditions in the City.
- Section III refreshes the City’s Land Use Policy Framework.
- Section IV pulls together an action plan, with suggested priorities.

At the beginning of each part of this plan, there is a summary page that describes the contents of that part and the ways in which the information in that part fits into the whole – a series of short “Executive Summaries” that tell the story.

## B. Community Context

### *Introduction*

When people seek to describe what makes Washington an attractive place to live and do business, they often resort to phrases like “good quality of life,” “small town atmosphere,” and “strong sense of place.” These phrases say much about the values of the community, but developing policies that can maintain and enhance them requires a more substantial definition. Attention to the community’s physical, social, and economic attributes is the key.

### *Vision Statement*

During the public process of adopting the CAMA Core Land Use Plan in 2007, the Washington City Council adopted a Vision Statement to guide city decision-making. The core of that vision appears below, setting out the fundamental values upon which that Comprehensive Plan is based.

**Establish balanced policies, plans, and development regulations while continuing to encourage economic and residential development that:**

- Is cooperatively planned and implemented with the city staff and appropriate external agencies.
- Provides objectively perceived economic incentives and benefits to the citizens of the City of Washington.
- Does not pose obvious adverse impacts to the city’s abundant natural resources or established neighborhood character and aesthetics.



That 2007 vision is a good starting point. But the circumstances and possibilities in Washington today call for a more specific description of how we see ourselves now and in the future. The Vision Statement should serve as the guide to the rest of the plan, and the plan serves as a blueprint for the goals, policies, recommendations, and actions for the future. Being clear about the Washington we want is important.

Accordingly, drawing from contemporary community documents that describe our aspirations for the future, this Comprehensive Plan offers the following enhanced Vision Statement as the description of how we view the future of this community:

We see Washington as a historically rich and presently vibrant community, situated at the key location of the joining of the Tar and Pamlico Rivers. Recognizing and respecting the heritage and culture, Washington citizens enjoy a high quality of life and look to the future with pride and enthusiasm. Redevelopment of the downtown and waterfront areas has turned this historic area into a modern-day center of commerce, leisure, arts, and entertainment. Retail businesses and services are convenient in multiple locations. A diversity of neighborhoods and housing styles provides a connected community fabric. It is easy and pleasant to walk and bike around the City. Eco-tourism brings visitors and energy to the City, as residents share the richness of this place with others. Local businesses provide goods and services and are successful. And all of this takes place within the context of a natural environment that is being protected so that it can continue to contribute to the lives of future generations of Washington residents. This is a City that has pride in its past, and faith in its future.

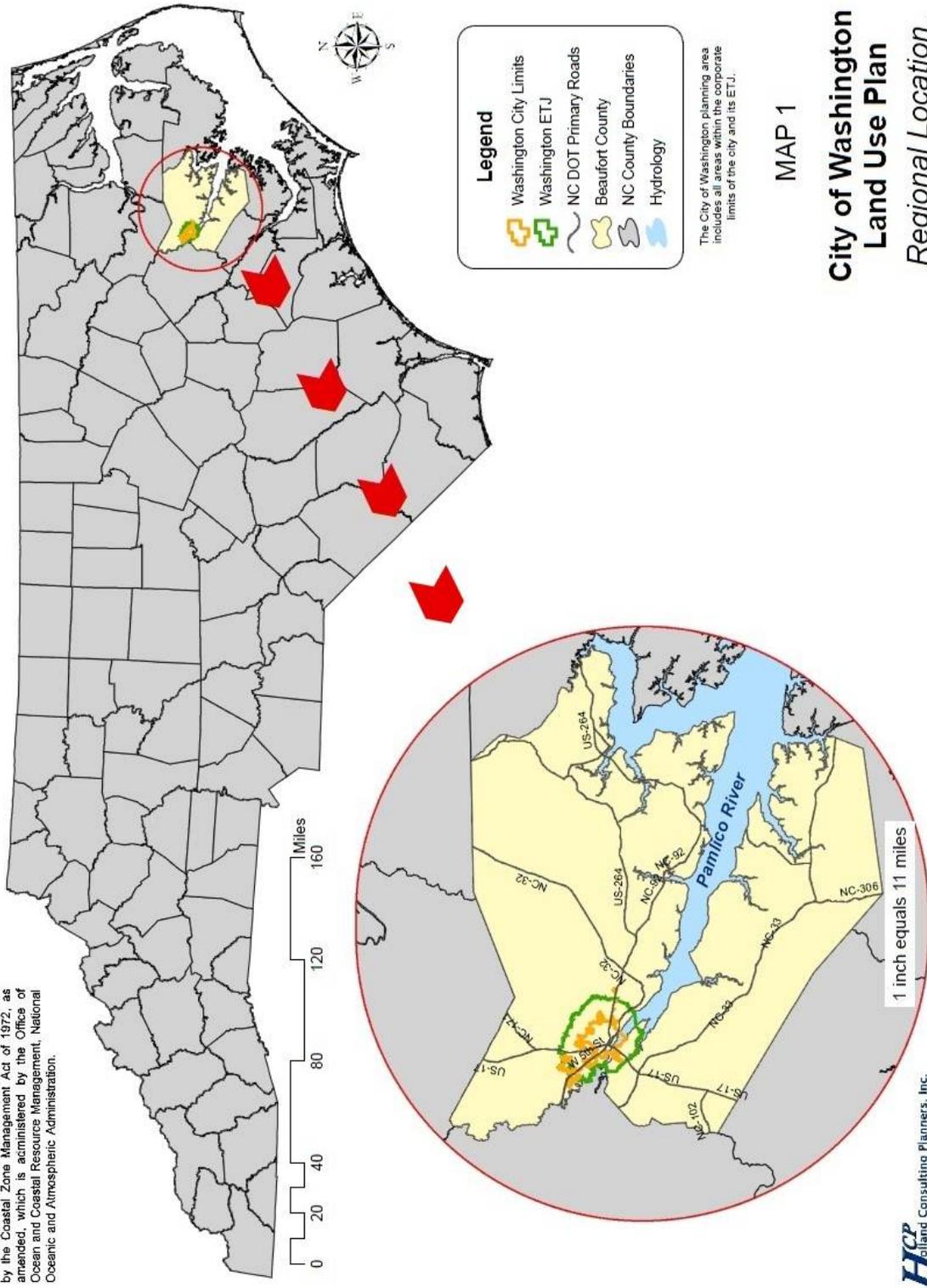
A map appears on the following page, excerpted from the City's 2007 CAMA Core Land Use Plan, showing the basic geography of Washington and its surrounding context (map prepared by Holland Consulting Planners, Inc.)

## C. Key Issues and Goals

### *Plan Framework*

This Comprehensive Plan lays out a framework for reaching this vision for the city. An important component of this process is articulating a set of goals, which follow after the regional map which appears on the next page. These goals for Washington's future are organized by issue areas. In the chapters that follow, these issues and goals are made operational by an accompanying set of action initiatives.

The preparation of this map was financed, in part through a grant provided by the North Carolina Coastal Management Program, through funds provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, which is administered by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



MAP 1

**City of Washington  
Land Use Plan**  
*Regional Location*

**HCP**  
Holland Consulting Planners, Inc.

### ISSUE: DOWNTOWN / WATERFRONT AREA

**Downtown/Waterfront Goal 1:** The character of Washington’s historic area and city center environment will be protected and enhanced to preserve our sense of place, promote economic strength, and ensure the city’s continuing appeal to residents, business people, and visitors.

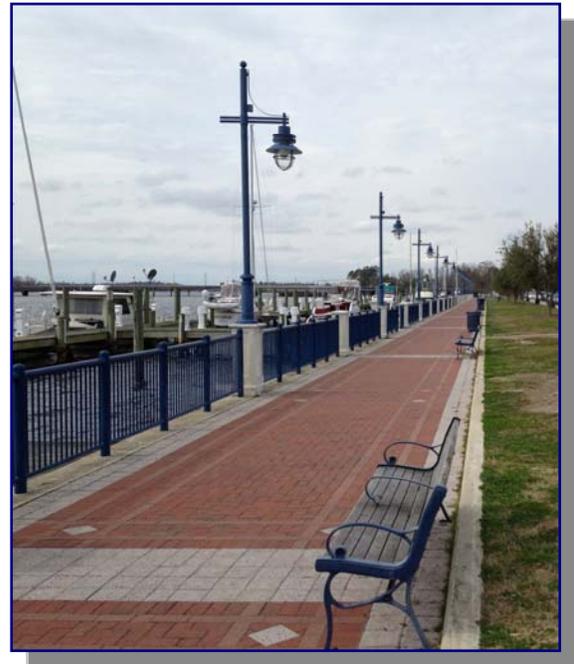
**Downtown/Waterfront Goal 2:** The core downtown area will continue to serve as a center of commerce, culture, and community, and will increasingly generate revenues to ensure the economic stability and longevity of the City.

**Downtown/Waterfront Goal 3:** The City will capitalize on the Tar and Pamlico Rivers as community amenities for enjoyment by residents and visitors.

**Downtown/Waterfront Goal 4:** Redevelopment and revitalization of the waterfront area will result in an engine of commerce for the City.

**Downtown/Waterfront Goal 5:** Redevelopment and revitalization of the waterfront area will consist of buildings and structures that set a highly appealing tone for the character of downtown and the waterfront.

**Downtown/Waterfront Goal 6:** Downtown will have well defined connectivity to the Pamlico River, and capitalize on the river as both an economic and aesthetic resource that strengthens downtown.



### ISSUE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**Economic Development Goal 1:** Washington will have a strong and diverse economy, providing quality jobs, and generating local government revenues that allow for the continued provision of quality public services and facilities.

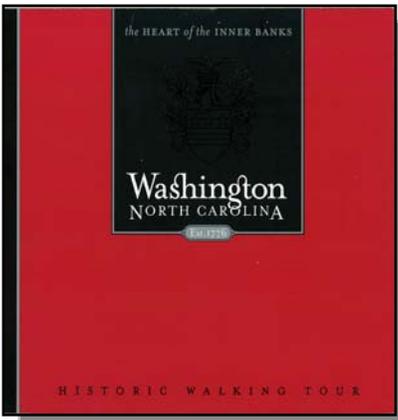
**Economic Development Goal 2:** Washington will be a community that is friendly to local businesses, with varied employment opportunities.

**ISSUE: COMMUNITY APPEARANCE**

**Community Appearance Goal 1:** Gateways and entrances to the City will be enhanced with landscaping and signage in a manner that announces entrance to the community and welcomes visitors.

**Community Appearance Goal 2:** Road corridors and streetscapes will be landscaped in strategic locations, with attention to lighting and public improvements that add visual character to the corridors, in addition to ongoing attention to road maintenance.

**Community Appearance Goal 3:** New development and redevelopment in the City will incorporate high standards of design that enhance the visual character of the community.



**ISSUE: HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Historic Preservation Goal 1:** The City of Washington will continue to recognize and protect significant architectural, historical, and archaeological resources that are part of the community's heritage.

**Historic Preservation Goal 2:** Washington's cultural heritage will be preserved in a manner that enhances the active connection between residents and the city's past, and provides visitors of the city with an authentic historical experience.

**Historic Preservation Goal 3:** The City of Washington will encourage repair and pursue abatement of nuisances for historic structures that have been neglected.

**ISSUE: TOURISM AND ECO-TOURISM**

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism Goal 1:** The City of Washington will be a travel and tourism destination of choice, drawing upon interest in historic and natural features to attract visitors and contribute to the local economy.

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism Goal 2:** Washington will protect the City's natural resources and community character, while simultaneously achieving a vibrancy in downtown and waterfront areas that complements the existing historic forms.

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism Goal 3:** The City of Washington will be a center of walking, biking, boating, and fishing activities that promote appreciation, preservation, and use of environmentally sensitive land and water features in and surrounding the City.



### ISSUE: TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY



**Transportation and Mobility Goal 1:** Advance the development of a transportation system that is safe, functional, and attractive for users of all modes of transportation, and makes the community accessible to all citizens.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 2:** Provide safe, convenient, and efficient opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle movement.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 3:** Make Washington a walkable city.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 4:** Reduce existing traffic congestion and safety problems.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 5:** Ensure that new development improves, not worsens, traffic and safety concerns, and is sensitive to environmental concerns.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 6:** Support the development and implementation of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

### ISSUE: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 1:** The City's public services will be provided in an efficient and effective manner to all residents of the City.

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 2:** Washington will provide a safe and secure environment for those who live, work, and visit the City through high quality public safety facilities and systems.

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 3:** The Beaufort County School System will continue to provide an exceptional education to the City's students.

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 4:** The City's parks and open space facilities, as well as recreational programming, will meet the needs of the full community, including families, youth, seniors, and citizens with special needs.

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 5:** The City will meet or exceed State requirements to improve water quality and help assure a safe drinking water supply, including



implementing best management practices for stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and improving treatment of wastewater.

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 6:** Public facilities and public lands will be utilized at their highest and best use, except for public lands in environmentally sensitive locations, where conservation should be the objective.

**Public Facilities and Services Goal 7:** Provide Adequate Fire, Police and Emergency Service in all incorporated and response areas of the City.

**ISSUE: COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS**

**Commercial Business Districts Goal 1:** The commercial business districts will provide high quality shopping and entertainment opportunities to the City and region for the long-term future.

**Commercial Business Districts Goal 2:** The commercial business districts will continue to provide a strong economic benefit to the City for the long-term future.



**Commercial Business Districts Goal 3:** New commercial business districts will complement the downtown and business corridors and will contain a mix of retail businesses, offices, restaurants, and entertainment/education facilities that offer a wide variety of goods, services, and jobs to residents.



**ISSUE: HOUSING**

**Housing Goal 1:** Promote an adequate supply of safe, affordable, and suitable housing options for residents.

**Housing Goal 2:** All persons who live and work in Washington should have the opportunity to rent or purchase safe, decent, accessible, and affordable housing.

**Housing Goal 3:** Washington will provide a variety of housing opportunities throughout the City, both in terms of the housing type and the price of housing, that respect the existing character of the community.

**Housing Goal 4:** Homeownership in Washington should be encouraged and opportunities sought to increase homeownership.

**Housing Goal 5:** The City's housing stock will be maintained, protected, and expanded to ensure an adequate supply of housing for future generations.

### ISSUE: NEIGHBORHOODS

**Neighborhoods Goal 1:** Preserve the character of the City's existing neighborhoods.

**Neighborhoods Goal 2:** Enhance the quality of the City's residential neighborhoods to promote livability and a strong sense of community.

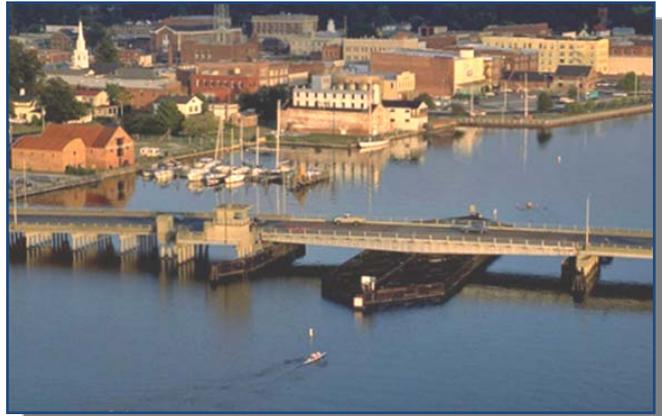
**Neighborhoods Goal 3:** The residential areas of the City will comprise a collection of distinct and attractive neighborhoods, each possessing a unique sense of place and shared identity.

**Neighborhoods Goal 4:** The residential neighborhoods will be adequately served with efficient transportation, parking, sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and other public facilities that are compatible with their neighborhood scale.



## Section II:

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



### Existing Conditions:

Washington is a vibrant community made up of distinctive neighborhoods and business districts. The geography of this city revolves around downtown and the waterfront, supported by a network of corridors that serve both transportation and economic needs.

#### A: Regional Setting

#### B: Current Conditions

1. Demographics
2. Housing
3. Economy
4. Community Facilities/Services
5. Natural Systems
6. Land Suitability
7. Current Land Use

#### C: Current Plans, Policies, Regulations

## A. Regional Setting

### *History*

Washington is a historic community that dates back to the pre-colonial era. The city, originally named, “Forks of the Tar,” changed its name in 1776 to the City of Washington to honor General George Washington, becoming the first city in the nation to do so. The city has a rich history of shipping and waterfront development. During the Revolutionary War, the city was one of the principal supply ports in the region, and its waterfront location made it an economic center of agriculture, fishing, and commerce trades.



Unfortunately, much of the city's central business district was destroyed by fire on September 3, 1900. However, the rebuilding of the downtown area in the next decade led to the beautiful Victorian architecture that has become a hallmark of downtown Washington. Today, the city is known for its beautiful, historically significant commercial downtown, beautiful stately homes, and vintage commercial buildings of Main Street.

### *Regional Context*

The City of Washington is located in eastern North Carolina along the Pamlico-Tar Rivers within Beaufort County, North Carolina in the inland coastal region of North Carolina. Encompassing 8.2 square miles, the city is the largest city in the county, and serves as the county seat, as well as the primary retail and employment center for the county and its other six incorporated municipalities — Aurora, Bath, Belhaven, Chocowinity, Pantego, and Washington Park.

The city is bordered on the north by Martin and Washington Counties, on the east by Hyde County, on the south by Pamlico and Craven Counties and on the west by Pitt County. The city is bisected by US 17, which serves as the major north/south corridor, and SR 264, which is the region's primary east/west corridor connecting the east coast beaches to western North Carolina. Washington is located less than 20 miles east of the city of Greenville, which is home to East Carolina University.

East Carolina University, along with its medical school and associated hospitals, accounts for much of the recent growth of the area. The City of Washington, with its family-friendly culture, waterfront, recreational opportunities, and reasonable

commuting distance from Greenville, is increasingly viewed as a desirable place to live for individuals and families associated with ECU.



While the city is completely contained within the Tar-Pam watershed, the city is divided into two parts by the Tar-Pamlico River. The Tar-Pamlico River is made up of two ecologically and geographically distinct portions of river with different names. The upper portion, the Tar River, originates in Person County as a freshwater spring and flows southeast about 140 miles to Washington. At Washington, the name changes to the Pamlico River, where it becomes an estuary, characterized by a wide, shallow bed, and brackish water. Here salt water from the ocean mixes with fresh, inland water flowing down the Tar. From Washington the Pamlico flows 40 miles to its confluence with the Pamlico Sound.

Map #2 in the Map Appendix at the back of this Plan shows the City of Washington Planning Area, along with zoning designations.

## B. Current Conditions

The following section documents the demographic data and existing conditions for the City of Washington. This summary of existing conditions provides the background data and statistical analysis that should serve as the foundational information for making policy decisions during the planning process. This document includes several analyses of existing conditions for Washington, using data obtained from the 2010 U.S. Census, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey (ACS), the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM), the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the City of Washington, and Beaufort County.

### *Demographics*

#### POPULATION

According to information from the U.S. Census Bureau, Washington has grown steadily in population since reaching a low point in 1980. The growth can primarily be attributed to the annexation of adjacent areas, the development of subdivisions along the eastern and western ends of the city, and the natural increase in population. The growth rate has been slowly declining since 1990, with a significant drop in the last decade. The city's growth rate, however, has been relatively slow compared to county and state rates, and has been decreasing. Over the last decade, the city's growth rate was just 1.7%, while Beaufort County's growth rate was 6.2% and the North Carolina growth rate was 18.5%. The following table charts the actual population changes and average annual compounded growth rates over the last 5 decades for the city, Beaufort County, and North Carolina.

Year	Washington Population	Average Annual Compounded Growth Rate	Beaufort County	Average Annual Compounded Growth Rate	North Carolina	Average Annual Compounded Growth Rate
1970	8,961	-1.03	35,980	-0.01	5,084,411	1.10
1980	8,418	-0.62	40,355	1.15	5,881,766	1.47
1990	9,075	0.75	42,283	0.47	6,628,637	1.20
2000	9,583	0.55	44,958	0.62	8,049,313	1.96
2010	9,744	0.17	47,759	0.61	9,535,483	1.71

Moving forward, The OSBM expects Washington’s population will continue to grow, but at a relatively small rate of growth. The table below shows the projected population growth for the city as well as the county in the state of North Carolina.

	Washington Population	Beaufort Co. Population	State Population
2015	10,740	51,142	10,331,630
2020	11,418	54,372	11,062,090
2025	12,096	57,601	11,780,936
2030	12,774	60,828	12,491,837

The City of Washington is often compared to New Bern because of similarities in history and downtown waterfront opportunities. New Bern has seen more aggressive growth in recent decades, accompanied by public and private investment in the downtown / waterfront area. New Bern’s growth rate had been very low until the decade of the 1980’s.

	Washington Population	New Bern Population
1980	8,418	14,557
1990	9,075	17,363
2000	9,583	23,128
2010	9,744	29,524

## ETHNICITY

The face of Washington has remained relatively unchanged since the last census, and the city remains quite evenly distributed among those who identify themselves as White (49%) and those who identify themselves as Black or African American (46%).

While the city has not traditionally had many Hispanics or Latinos as residents, the number is increasing slightly. In 2000, only 2.7% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. This number increased in 2010 to 5.5%. These changes will likely impact the community in many ways, such as new housing and education needs. The table below shows the racial diversity found in Washington and North Carolina in 2010.

Race	Washington	% of Total	North Carolina	% of Total
White	4,778	49.0%	6,528,950	68.5%
Black or African American	4,433	45.5%	2,048,628	21.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	22	0.2%	122,110	1.3%
Asian	51	0.5%	208,962	2.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	0.1%	6,604	0.1%
Other	303	3.1%	414,030	4.3%
Multi-Race	149	1.5%	206,199	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,744</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,535,483</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 16 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### TRENDS IN AGE

Overall, data show that the population for the city and county is slightly older than the state averages. Based on the most recent U.S. Census figures, the median ages of the populations for the City of Washington increased from 39.5 to 41.6, and the percentage of people over 65 was from 19%, compared to the state percentage of 13%.

Looking forward, the trend appears to be continuing; Washington's future population will likely include a larger percentage of seniors and lower percentages of persons under 65 than the present population. While this is a trend that is being seen around the nation as the baby boomer generation ages, OSBM projects that Beaufort County will have a considerably higher percentage of adults over the age of 65 than the state of North Carolina over the next two decades. As shown in the table listed below, in 2030, it is projected that Beaufort County will have 28% of its population over the age of 65, compared to North Carolina, which will have only 19%. The City of Washington's age profile is very similar to, but slightly younger than, the Beaufort County Profile. For Washington in 2010: 24% under 18; 60% 18-64; and 16% over 64.

	Under 18		18 – 64		Over 64	
	Beaufort County	NC	Beaufort County	NC	Beaufort County	NC
2010	22%	24%	59%	63%	19%	13%
2015	21%	23%	57%	62%	22%	15%
2020	20%	23%	56%	61%	25%	16%
2025	19%	23%	54%	59%	27%	18%
2030	19%	23%	53%	58%	28%	19%

### Housing

#### HOUSING TRENDS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Washington had 4,973 housing units in 2010, meaning the city added 574 new housing units in the last decade. While the number of actual occupied units increased over the last decade, however, the number of vacancies, as well as the vacancy rate increased as well. In 2010, approximately 89% of all units were occupied and 11% were vacant, an increase in the vacancy rate by 1.3%. Tenancy in Washington is split fairly evenly, with owner-occupied housing accounting for approximately 48% of all housing units, and rental housing accounting for 52%.



	2000		2010		Change (2000-2010)	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	4,399	100%	4,973	100%	574	100.0%
Vacant	431	9.8%	552	11.1%	121	21.1%
Occupied	3,968	90.2%	4,421	88.9%	453	78.9%
Owner-Occupied	2,043	51.5%	2,113	47.8%	70	15.4%
Renter-Occupied	1,925	48.5%	2,308	52.2%	383	84.6%

The city’s housing stock is representative of the city’s history, with much of the single family housing being slightly older than the average age of housing in North Carolina. In 2010, the median building-year for owner-occupied homes in the City of Washington was 1964, compared to the statewide median building-year for owner occupied housing of 1985. The median home value in 2010 was \$151,700 and the average household size was 2.1 persons per household.

### *Economy*

Key 2010 data on local economic conditions for Washington include:

- 2010 Median Household Income = \$26,990
- 2010 Per Capita Income = \$18,937
- 2010 Unemployment Rate = 10.7%

Washington’s median household income for 2010 was estimated to be almost half of that for Beaufort County as a whole. The percentage of people whose income was below the poverty level in 2010 was slightly higher in Washington at 25.3%, compared to the County poverty rate of 17.2%.

	Washington		Beaufort County		North Carolina	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Civilian Labor Force	4,145		22,127		4,640,229	
Unemployment		10.7%		10.4%		5.6%
Median Household Income	26,990		40,653		45,570	
Income Ranges						
Less than \$10,000	814	18.4%	2,148	10.7%	307,800	8.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	493	11.2%	1,666	8.3%	229,967	6.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	765	17.3%	2,743	13.7%	440,441	12.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	491	11.1%	2,225	11.1%	431,763	11.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	655	14.8%	3,148	15.7%	552,640	15.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	615	13.9%	3,851	19.2%	676,157	18.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	252	5.7%	2,099	10.5%	409,499	11.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	239	5.4%	1,530	7.6%	359,150	9.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	32	0.7%	312	1.6%	112,540	3.1%
\$200,000 or more	65	1.5%	337	1.7%	106,222	2.9%
Percent with incomes Below Poverty Level, 2010		25.3%		17.2%		15.5%

Historically, as with much of the State of North Carolina, manufacturing has been the base of the city’s local economy, with a relatively high average weekly wage paid to employees. However, the number of persons as well as percentage engaging in manufacturing employment continues to decrease. In 2000, 15.2% of Washington’s work force was in manufacturing, compared to just 9.6% in 2010. Retail trade also declined over the last decade from 13% of the work force to 9.5%.

## 18 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Emerging trends, however, can be seen in Construction, which almost doubled, from 6.9% to 12.3% and the Finance and Insurance industry, which increased from 3.9% to 6.4%. The city's workforce also increased almost 2% in the arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation sector, a trend which bodes well for the city's tourism industry.

The table below provides a closer analysis of various other forms of employment in the area compared to Beaufort County and the state.

Civilian Employment by Industry	Washington		Beaufort County		North Carolina	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	130	4.0%	1,443	7.3%	61,011	1.4%
Construction	405	12.3%	2,247	11.4%	349,220	8.2%
Manufacturing	316	9.6%	2,804	14.2%	568,153	13.4%
Wholesale trade	49	1.5%	419	2.1%	128,111	3.0%
Retail trade	312	9.5%	2,048	10.4%	489,411	11.6%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	52	1.6%	701	3.5%	186,796	4.4%
Information	10	0.3%	153	0.8%	82,087	1.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	212	6.4%	978	5.0%	278,182	6.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	179	5.4%	916	4.6%	388,417	9.2%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	967	29.4%	4,736	24.0%	956,181	22.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	387	11.8%	1,338	6.8%	362,590	8.6%
Other services, except public administration	145	4.4%	1,097	5.6%	202,053	4.8%
Public administration	125	3.8%	876	4.4%	181,875	4.3%

### *Community Facilities /Services*

#### ELECTRIC, WATER, AND SEWER

The City of Washington owns electric, water, and sewer utilities to provide these services to residents, businesses and industries of Washington, North Carolina.

The water supply source for the City of Washington is groundwater from the Castle Hayne Aquifer. The city currently has more than adequate water and sewer capacity to meet the needs of its residents. The average annual daily water use for the City of Washington in 2004 was only 55% of system capacity and the average annual daily discharge is only at 49% of the plant's permitted wastewater treatment capacity.

The city has also adopted the Wellhead Protection Plan to ensure that potential contaminants will not reach the city's wells. Through this plan, the City monitors the quality of the City's water supply and mitigates any potential contamination.

## TRANSPORTATION

There are several major thoroughfares in the city, most notably the traditional Highway 17, the new Highway 17 Bypass, and Highway 264. According to the City's Thoroughfare Plan, completed in 2000, sections on both Highway 17 and 264 are operating near or over capacity. It was anticipated that by the year 2030, if no improvements were made to the existing system, the majority of those roadways would be over capacity.



The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) recently completed the new 6.8-mile Highway 17 Bypass around Washington, including a 2.8-mile structure over the Tar River, which should alleviate the capacity concerns with Highway 17. A key related challenge for the City now is to be thinking about land use patterns in the vicinity of the interchanges for this new bypass.

NCDOT is currently working with Beaufort County and the City of Washington on an update of the regional transportation plan and programs for funding additional road improvements. The new Beaufort County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) includes coordination with the communities of Aurora, Bath, Belhaven, Pantego, Chocowinity, Washington, and Washington Park. The initiative started in August, 2011, and is currently focusing on data collection and modeling. A draft plan with recommendations for priority improvements will be ready for community review in November, 2012.

Also in the works is a new initiative with the Mid-East Commission to prepare a new Bicycle Master Plan for the City of Washington. This initiative was approved in March, 2012, and will begin shortly.



Public transportation services are provided by the Beaufort Area Transit System (BATS). BATS was established to meet the needs of the general public, special needs of the elderly, persons with disabilities, and disadvantaged persons for whom mass transportation services are unavailable, insufficient or inappropriate. Beaufort Area Transit was developed through a partnership between Beaufort County and the NC Department of Transportation, when the Beaufort County Developmental Center agreed to serve as the county's lead transportation agency.

Beaufort Area Transit is a coordinated rural transportation system made up of four, twelve passenger conversion vans, one minivan, four lift equipped vans, one eighteen passenger bus with lift, one twenty four passenger bus and one 10 passenger LTV with lift.

## 20 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The system provides transportation to citizens in small towns and rural areas of the county. The system provides rural residents with access to employment, education, social events, medical and recreational activities.

The City is served by twice-per-day Greyhound bus service, taxi service, and rental car agencies.

Beaufort Area Transit focuses on providing transportation to:

- Nutritional sites for meals
- Doctor's appointments
- Sources of medical treatment
- Drug Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Some Social Events
- Work
- Class/School
- Shopping



For air transportation: The closest major airports are Raleigh-Durham International Airport in North Carolina and Norfolk International in Virginia. Raleigh is one hour and 45 minutes (depending on traffic) west of Washington via US 64 and 264. Norfolk is 2 hours or more (again, depending on traffic) north of Washington (routes vary). Additionally, offering regional air transport service near the City of Washington are the Pitt County-City of Greenville Airport and the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport in New Bern, North Carolina.

The City of Washington has its own airfield, Warren Field (OCW), for private aviation services. Improvements to facilities are currently underway, including runway repairs, and management options are under consideration. Key facts about Warren Field:



- Located on Airport Road off of Market Street
- General and corporate traffic
- Two 5,000-foot runways, one concrete and the other asphalt
- Both runways lighted with instrument approach
- Tie-downs available for individual airplanes.

This facility has significant potential for growth and contribution to Washington's economic activity, and represents an important opportunity as the City of Washington continues to explore ways to attract new businesses and employment centers. The City's goal is to grow the Airport in a manner that maintains convenience to local businesses and the flying community, that helps recruit new industry/business, and that achieves economic self-sustainability for the facility.

## Natural Systems

The current CAMA Core Land Use Plan includes detailed analysis and descriptions of natural features, systems, and hazards for the city. The intent of this comprehensive plan is to carry forward this information and use it as a basis for making future land use and conservation policy decisions. This section provides a summary of the analysis and descriptions found in the CAMA plan.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Washington is located in the low coastal plain physiographic province of North Carolina, along the banks of the Tar/Pamlico River. The city's terrain averages about ten feet above sea level, and generally slopes from the north and west towards the south and east, with slopes ranging from level to 4%. The low-lying land and proximity to surface water make flooding due to storm surge from ocean overwash associated with hurricanes or other tropical weather events a considerable threat for city residents. The map on the following page, prepared by Holland Consulting Engineers, Inc. as part of the CAMA Core Land Use Plan in 2006, illustrates the important environmental areas and features found in Washington and described in the pages following the map.



Map #3 in the Map Appendix at the end of this Plan shows a composite of environmental features. In looking at the map, ranges of environmental sensitivity are classified by references to Class 1, 2, or 3. Class 1 is defined as land that contains only minimal hazards and limitations that can be addressed by commonly accepted land planning and development practices. Class 2 refers to land that has hazards and limitations for development that can be addressed by restrictions on land uses, special site planning, or the provision of public services such as water and sewer. Class 3 is land that has serious hazards and limitations, and can generally support only very low-intensity uses such as conservation and open space.

-  Class 1
-  Class 2
-  Class 3

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### SOILS

A detailed soils survey of Beaufort County was completed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1983. The survey includes a description of the soils and their location, and a discussion of the suitability, limitations, and management of the soils for specified uses. Based on that survey, there are 30 different soil types located within Washington's planning jurisdiction, several of which are hydric soils that are prone to flooding and thus present constraints to development. Only 23% of the city, however, has soils that present severe problems for development and the majority of those soils are located on the land east of the Tar and Pamlico Rivers and land immediately adjacent to the river tributaries. Therefore, the majority of the city has soils that do not present severe development limitations.

### FLOODPLAINS

The low elevations, hydric soils, and presence of surface waters collectively create a system of Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) throughout the city. A SFHA is defined as a land area with a greater than 1% chance per year of flooding and is also known as a "floodplain." Approximately 51% of Washington and 44% of the area in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) lies within a SFHA. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a home located within an SFHA has a 26% chance of suffering flood damage during the term of a 30-year mortgage. Map #3A in the Map Appendix at the end of this Plan shows flood hazard areas from the 2007 CAMA Plan. Three flood designations of flood hazard areas are shown on the map: Zone AE refers to floodplain areas, those areas with a one percent annual chance of flooding. Zone AEFW refers to floodway areas, referring to the channel of a stream. Zone "Shaded X" refers to areas outside of the 1% chance floodplain (AE), but still considered to be a supplemental flood hazard area, in which there is a 0.2% chance per year of flooding (also known as the "500-year floodplain.")

### COMPOSITE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

According to the 2007 CAMA Plan, state designated fragile areas in coastal North Carolina include coastal wetlands, ocean beaches and shorelines, estuarine waters and shorelines, public trust water, complex natural areas, areas sustaining remnant species, unique geological formations, registered natural landmarks, swamps, prime wildlife habitats, areas of excessive slope, areas of excessive erosion, scenic points, archeological sites, historical sites, wetlands.

In addition, maritime forests and outstanding resource waters are also included but not formally designated by the state. Areas of environmental concern (AEC) for Washington include coastal wetlands, estuarine waters, estuarine shorelines, and public trust areas. These areas were mapped and evaluated as part of the CAMA planning process. A composite map of environmentally sensitive areas was developed to identify three tiers of potential for land development limitations and hazards.



## COASTAL WETLANDS

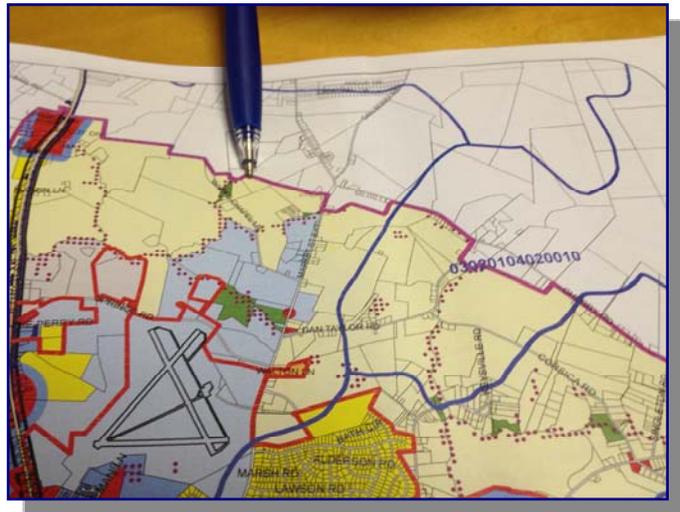
Coastal wetlands are marshes that regularly or occasionally flood by lunar or wind tides, and that have at least one of the ten types of plants designated by the Coastal Resources Commission. Coastal wetlands are one of Washington's Areas of Environmental Concern. According to NC Department of Coastal Management's 2003 Coastal Wetlands Inventory, approximately 129 acres of the city, or 2.51% of the city's land area, are classified as coastal wetlands.

### *Land Suitability*

The CAMA Core Land Use Plan also includes detailed information about land suitability in the City and the City's ETJ. Overall, land in the city is predominantly suitable for development. The majority of the land within the city determined to have a high suitability rating is located within the city limits, while much of the land south of the Tar-Pamlico River is unsuitable due to severe environmental constraints, such as wetlands.

### *Current Land Use*

Review of existing land use in Washington is a starting point for consideration of future possibilities. A map of existing land use was prepared as part of this Comprehensive Plan, and developed using multiple Geographic Information System (GIS) layers of data. A base existing land use layer that included residential, forest, wetland, and agricultural lands was compared to current zoning, parcel ownership and building values to identify categories of land use. This information was then mapped and two Current Land Use Maps were prepared, included in the Map Appendix. Map #4 shows Existing Land Use for the entire City of Washington. Map #4A focuses on Existing Land Use in the Downtown area. Following are definitions of land uses that are used on the map.



## EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES

**PARKS – OPEN SPACE:** This category includes open space that is used or intended for use as a recreational area. Open Space land uses are typically located in areas that contain existing parkland. Existing and proposed City parks, as well as recreational facilities, fall into this category.

## 24 EXISTING CONDITIONS

**UNDEVELOPED:** Land which is expected to remain in an essentially undeveloped state has been designated under this general category. This designation acknowledges the existing constraints and limitations in floodplain areas and resource protection areas along the Tar – Pamlico Rivers. Single-family detached residential units may be permitted within some designated land use areas, but at a density not to exceed one unit per two acres.

**RESIDENTIAL:** Residential land uses have been divided into three separate land use categories based on associated variable residential densities. These categories include: Low Density, Medium Density, and High Density Residential.

Low Density Residential: This category permits up to four (4) dwelling units per acre and pertains generally to conventional subdivision development. Clustering concepts and innovative development lay-out planning are encouraged to achieve open space and sensitive lands preservation and conservation.

Medium Density Residential: This category permits up to eight (8) dwelling units per acre and may include a planned mixture of single family detached and attached units. This residential density is applicable to many infill and transition areas, to permit new development to be consistent with existing neighborhood residential patterns.

High Density Residential: This category permits up to 12 dwelling units per acre and is typically associated with the apartment type of development. Although denser residential developments already exist in the City, no additional land is anticipated to be designated or zoned to allow development in excess of 12 units per acre.

**COMMERCIAL:** There are two categories here: Commercial-General and Commercial-Office.

Commercial-General: Areas with this designation are generally characterized by retail and wholesale trade activities, services (including financial institutions), offices, and restaurants. The City has developed a separate Commercial Shopping Center district to encourage development of local shopping centers with neighborhood-oriented retail uses such as grocery stores, personal service establishments, and similar operations that serve specific community or neighborhood areas. The City also incorporates Highway Commercial zoning.

Commercial-Office: This category provides for the location of predominantly non-retail commercial uses such as small scale office developments. These less intensive uses, with appropriate landscaping and screening, are intended to serve as suitable transitions between residential areas and more intensive commercial development.

**INDUSTRIAL:** This designation is associated where manufacturing, wholesale and limited ancillary retail uses, warehousing, office uses, and distribution facilities are located.

**INSTITUTIONAL:** This land use category includes public and semi-public uses such as City-owned buildings, schools and churches as well as larger institutions.

## C. Current Plans, Policies, and Regulations

Planning efforts in the City of Washington, as well as Beaufort County, have been going on for decades, and a number of policy documents and directives are already in place, providing guidelines for decision makers, planners, developers, and residents. While this comprehensive plan encompasses a broad array of community planning topics, it is designed to be integrated with the other planning documents and recommendations previously adopted by the city. This section discusses some of the more prominent planning initiatives that are currently relevant with respect to planning policies in the city of Washington. The first three plans deal with land use and transportation; while the next four deal with downtown development; and the final two are related plans: one addressing historic district guidelines and one addressing parks and recreational facilities.

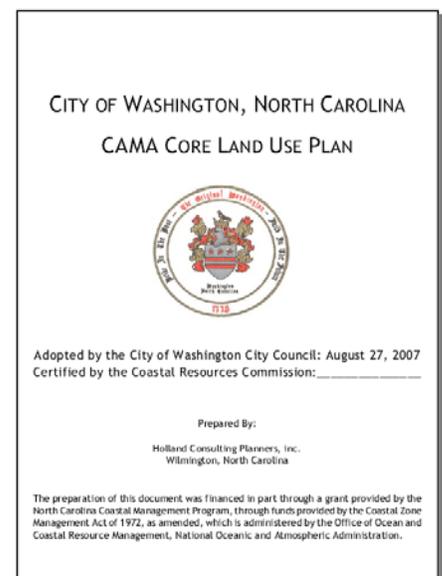
1. The *CAMA Core Land Use Plan*;
2. *Thoroughfare Plan for the City of Washington and Comprehensive Transportation Plan*;
3. The *Pedestrian Master Plan*;
4. The *Economic Repositioning Program*;
5. The *Downtown Revitalization Strategy*;
6. The *City of Washington Visualization and Reinvestments Strategy*;
7. The *Parking Study for Downtown Washington*;
8. The City's *Historic District Brochure and Design Guidelines*; and
9. The *Washington Parks and Recreation Master Plan*.

### A. Land Use and Transportation Plans

The city relies on two major land use plans to guide land use decisions in the planning area: The CAMA Core Land Use Plan and this document, the city's Comprehensive Plan. The city's Parks and Recreation Plan and Thoroughfare Plan also provide guidance. Summaries of the plans follow in the section below.

#### I. THE CAMA CORE LAND USE PLAN

Along with the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan in 2007, the city of Washington also adopted a CAMA Core Land Use Plan that same year. CAMA Core Land Use Plans are a product of the North Carolina Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), which was adopted by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1974. The act requires the 20 counties in the coastal areas of North Carolina to adopt land use



## 26 EXISTING CONDITIONS

plans in order ensure polices are in place to address growth issues such as the protection of productive resources (i.e., farmland, forest resources, fisheries), desired types of economic development, natural resource protection and the reduction of storm hazards.

Municipalities are not technically required to complete a CAMA Land Use Plan. However, if the city does not complete its own certified CAMA plan, state and federal reviewing bodies would automatically use the Beaufort County CAMA Land Use Plan instead. Since Washington faces issues that are distinct from Beaufort County, the City Council commissioned its own CAMA plan for the city beginning in 2004.

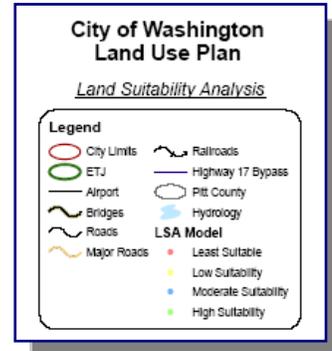
Washington's CAMA Core Land Use Plan serves two key purposes: (1) to comply with state planning requirements for the CAMA (Coastal Area Management Act) as certified by the Coastal Resources Commission, and (2) to provide a blueprint plan for land use in the county through a vision, policy framework, future land use plan, and implementation strategies to achieve the county's vision.

The plan is a data-rich document, providing numerous details on the city's population, economy, and land use patterns, and environmental conditions. The CAMA Plan also documents key growth related issues that were identified through a robust public planning process. The key issues identified in the Plan are:

- Improving the Central Business District;
- Managing the development and impacts along the new Highway 17 Bypass;
- Developing and Improving Gateways into the City;
- Prioritizing Areas for Annexation; and
- Stabilizing and improving neighborhoods.

The CAMA plan also includes a number of policies and implementation steps that cover a range of topics. These policy topics include: Public Access; Land Use Compatibility; Infrastructure Carrying Capacity; Transportation; Natural Hazard Areas; Water Quality; and Local Areas of Concern, including cultural, historic, and scenic areas, economic development; downtown revitalization; marinas/shoreline development; and general health and human service's needs.

This Comprehensive Plan does not replace Washington's current CAMA Core Land Use Plan as one of the city's key policy documents. Indeed, while the two documents complement the other in policies and land use directives, they serve quite different purposes. CAMA plans are adopted solely to help communities protect sensitive coastal and estuarine resources known as "Areas of Environmental Concern." In the city of Washington Areas of Environmental Concern include coastal wetlands, estuarine waters, estuarine shorelines, and public trust areas. Since the majority of land in the city's planning area is not an AEC, it is important to have a policy document that can help guide development and land use decisions throughout the city's entire planning area and not just the specific Areas of Environmental Concern.



## 2. THE THOROUGHFARE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

The Thoroughfare Plan documents the findings of a study by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to update the 1979 Washington-Washington Park Thoroughfare Plan. The study was initiated 1997 in response to a request from local officials to evaluate the increased congestion on US 17 and US 264. The Plan was adopted by the City Council in 2000. The purpose of the study was to reexamine the present and future transportation needs of the Washington area and make recommendations as a guide for providing a coordinated, adequate, and economical major street system.

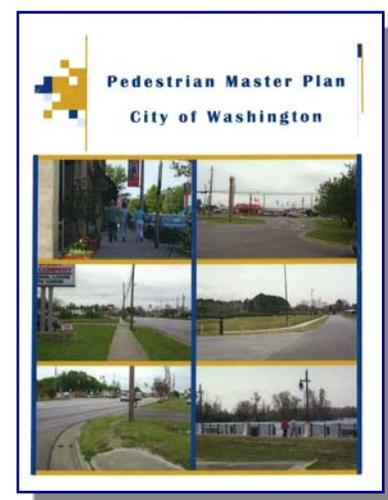
Based on the results of a traffic forecast model that uses data on traffic, population, housing, employment, and vehicle ownership to simulate travel patterns, the Thoroughfare Plan recommend several upgrades for major and minor thoroughfares in the city. Some of these recommendations, such as the construction of a US 17 Bypass, have been completed over the years; others have not.

However, new planning efforts are underway to update the city's transportation plans. Beaufort County, in a joint effort with the City of Washington, and the towns of Aurora, Bath, Belhaven, Chocowinity, Pantego, and Washington Park, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and the Mid-East Rural Planning Organization, is in the process of developing a new Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

A CTP is a multi-modal plan, which addresses the concerns of transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians in addition to highway users. It provides solutions that will promote and provide for safe, efficient, cost-effective transportation systems, while addressing current and future travel needs. The CTP Study is currently in the very early stages of initial data collection and is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2013. Upon completion of the CTP, the city's 2000 Thoroughfare Plan should be archived.

## 3. PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

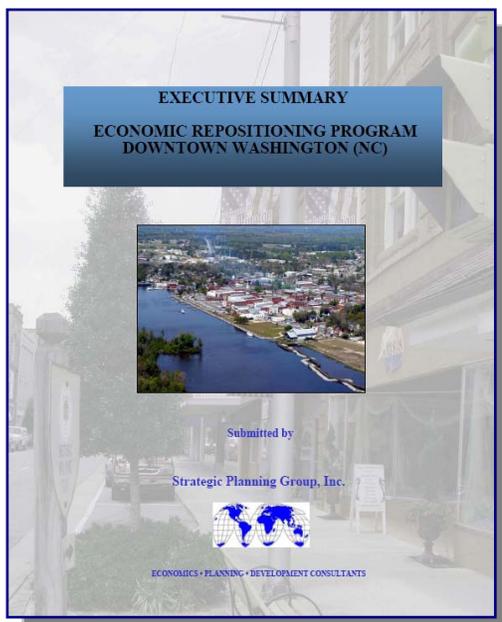
This 2006 Master Plan contains an inventory of existing pedestrian facilities and programs, along with a description of plans for additional pedestrian facilities. The Master Plan also discusses regulations that impact pedestrian facilities, transportation issues related to public schools, and current barriers to walking. Recommendations include work on pedestrian facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Guidelines, (such as installation of ramps, repairing damaged sidewalks, and improving the timing of signalized crosswalks). The Plan also recommends that the City provide incentives to existing businesses to upgrade their properties to include sidewalks that connect the public walkway to the customer entrance of businesses. The Plan calls for regulations that require sidewalks on public streets when properties develop fronting on such streets. In addition, the City's Bicycle Plan is currently being updated.



## *B. Downtown Development Plans*

Revitalization efforts in the downtown began 20 years ago, when the city developed the 1996 *Downtown Washington Strategic Plan and Implementation Projects* (aka, the Renaissance Plan) to provide a strategic plan to jump start the revitalization of Downtown in 1996. Then, in 2002, the City commissioned the North Carolina Downtown Development Association to provide further revitalization recommendation. That report suggested that the city adopt the “Main Street” approach to revitalization and provided 33 suggestions and insights divided into the four Main Street categories: Organization, Economic Restructuring, Design/Planning and Promotion.” Since then, changes in the local economy and real estate market, led the town to pursue other plans and strategies for the downtown district; a summary of those initiatives can be found below.

### 4. THE ECONOMIC REPOSITIONING PROGRAM



As part of Washington’s efforts to reposition the downtown as a highly-visible, active downtown, the Washington City Council, endorsed the formation of Downtown Washington on the Waterfront, Inc. (DWOW), a 501c3, non-profit corporation in early 2003. The DWOW was tasked with managing the efforts to revitalize the downtown district.

In 2004, the DWOW commissioned Strategic Planning Group, Inc. to develop a Downtown Revitalization Strategy based on “sound economic/marketing principles and community input.” The Economic Repositioning Program document is the summary those efforts. The document lays out the history and current inventory of downtown Washington and evaluates the downtown’s strengths and weaknesses. It also sets forth a vision for the downtown: By bundling the area-wide resources, downtown Washington will become “The

Heart of the Inner Banks.”

Importantly, the document also sets forth implementation steps to “make the downtown vision a reality.” The recommended implementation steps include:

- Establishing a strong linkage to the Greenville market;
- Promoting additional marina space and supporting facilities;
- Create activity centers on the Riverfront;
- Promoting connectivity to Main Street;
- Improving appearance/façade of buildings;
- Promoting additional lodging;
- Promoting downtown housing;

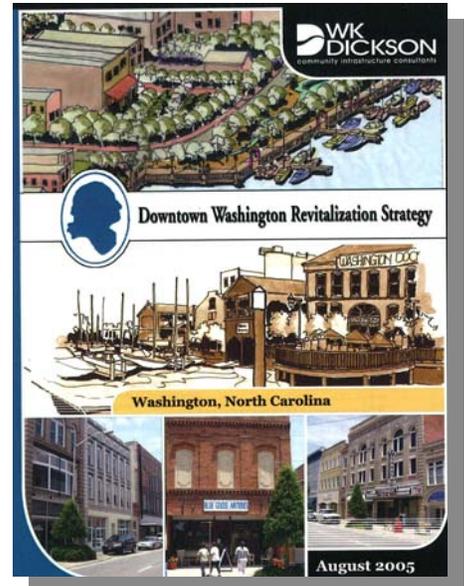
- Providing additional parking, establish a management plan for parking, create two-way streets, provide service vehicle access; and
- Cultivating visual, performing arts-cultural, and historic resources and activities.

The paper also documents the potential for revitalization, determining that it may be possible to intensify and enhance its economic activity without greatly changing the existing character that is prized by residents.

## 5. DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

This 2005 document contains a large inventory of market-based and design ideas to help facilitate the revitalization of Downtown Washington and the Waterfront area. Included are a series of sketches illustrating possible streetscape improvements and street tree planting options. Also included are a set of recommendations suggesting consideration of the following initiatives:

- Improvements to the backs of buildings facing the waterfront.
- Overlooks and fountains at/near the waterfront.
- Increased pedestrian connections between downtown and the waterfront.
- Enhancement of gateways to the downtown area.
- Revisiting parking strategies for downtown.



## 6. VISUALIZATION AND REINVESTMENTS STRATEGY

In 2009, new challenges and opportunities on the waterfront prompted the Washington City Council, working through the Waterfront Harbor District Alliance, to hire a consulting firm to put together a compelling visualization of key investments to show what the future of Washington's downtown and waterfront should hold over the next twenty years.



CITY OF WASHINGTON WATERFRONT  
*Visualization + Reinvestment Strategy*

Seven key goals for the project effort were established by the Committee:

- Connect Main Street to the river through strong pedestrian linkages and activation of street edges with retail, commercial, public spaces and other uses;
- Assure the provision of public and private parking in support of increased development and activity;
- Reinforce the premier status of the waterfront as a space for public use and assembly;
- Augment the circulation pattern within and adjacent to the study area in such a way that maximizes connectivity while minimizing public expense;
- Establish a vision and reinvestment strategy that enhances the brand of Washington's downtown as a "Central Business District on the River";
- Ensure creation of an implementable, pragmatic strategy that considers financing issues, zoning, urban design, community input and other elements; and,
- Ensure the strategy favorably contributes to the City's tax base of upwards of \$60 to \$90 million by creating designs which include both new construction and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

Based on extensive community engagement and involvement, Washington's unique downtown character, and a knowledge of factors that have traditionally proven to help downtown markets become successful, the document recommends a series of initiatives and public improvements.

### 7. THE PARKING STUDY FOR DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON

In 2006, the Washington City Council established a Parking Task Force for the purpose of evaluating downtown parking issues. The Washington Harbor District Alliance, a non-profit focused on the revitalization of downtown, volunteered to help the Task Force in the preparation of the study. WHDA also enlisted the services of the North Carolina Main Street Program to provide technical assistance, provide the guidelines for collecting data, conduct the analysis of the information, and prepare the written report.

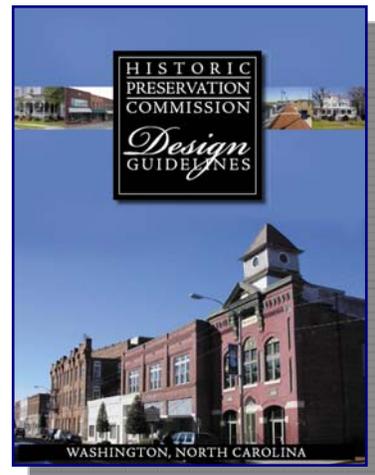
The study examined parking in the "downtown area", specifically, the twenty-four city blocks extending from the riverfront to Third Street and US 17 to just east of Bonner Street. The study concluded that there is currently no shortage of parking supply based on observation of the parking activity in downtown Washington. Indeed, the survey of parking occupancy levels suggest between 50%-75% of the spaces within the study area are available at any given time. However, there are shortages in certain areas at certain times, and some residents perceive that the problem is greater than it actually is. The study recommended that the city:

- **Manage parking supply by** (1) installing a comprehensive wayfinding signage system; (2) designating parking; (3) making alley improvements to help with connectivity; (4) considering two-way streets in downtown; and (5) finding alternatives to parking.
- **Enforce regulations through:** (1) time limits; (2) fines; and (3) enforcement personnel.
- **Debunk parking misconceptions by:** (1) disseminating the information in this report to the media and general public; (2) developing a marketing theme that can be incorporated into advertisements; and (3) providing informational brochures on off-street parking availability and how it can be used.
- **Plan for development of additional supply by:** (1) considering parking lot consolidation; (2) planning for future parking infrastructure; (3) anticipating parking requirements for new development; (4) establishing a special service district; (5) establish a parking or development authority; and (6) exploring joint venture partnerships.

### *C. Related Plans*

#### 8. THE CITY'S HISTORIC DISTRICT BROCHURE AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City of Washington's ongoing preservation efforts have made its historic district one of the most historically intact districts in the State. It has retained its historic nineteenth century character. The city's Zoning Ordinance designates the boundaries for the city's Historic District in downtown Washington. The District, which encompasses around 600 properties, is also on the National Register of Historic Places. Exterior improvements, new construction, or changes to property in the Historic District require review by the city to ensure that changes will comply with Historic District Guidelines. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued before a property owner can make changes to the exterior portions of a building and other outdoor property design features.



#### 9. WASHINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Washington's City Council adopted the city's most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan in February 2008. The Plan inventories and evaluates the city's 29 parks/facilities, noting the constraints, as well as the potential for each park/facility. The Plan also compares the city facilities with National standards and while the city is generally providing adequate facilities, it recognizes there are some unmet needs in the community. Based on that, the Plan recommends:

- Building both a West Side and North Side Park;
- Making the temporary Dock Station and Restroom Facilities permanent facilities;

## 32 EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Adding parking at Bobby Andrews Recreation Center;
- Building a gymnasium; and
- Developing additional adult fields.

The Plan also recommends a Landscape Beautification Plan for all current and future city properties and incorporating the Harbor Management Plan into the Recreation Master Plan. The Plan also includes general policies and guidelines for the city to consider with respect to recreation and park facilities.

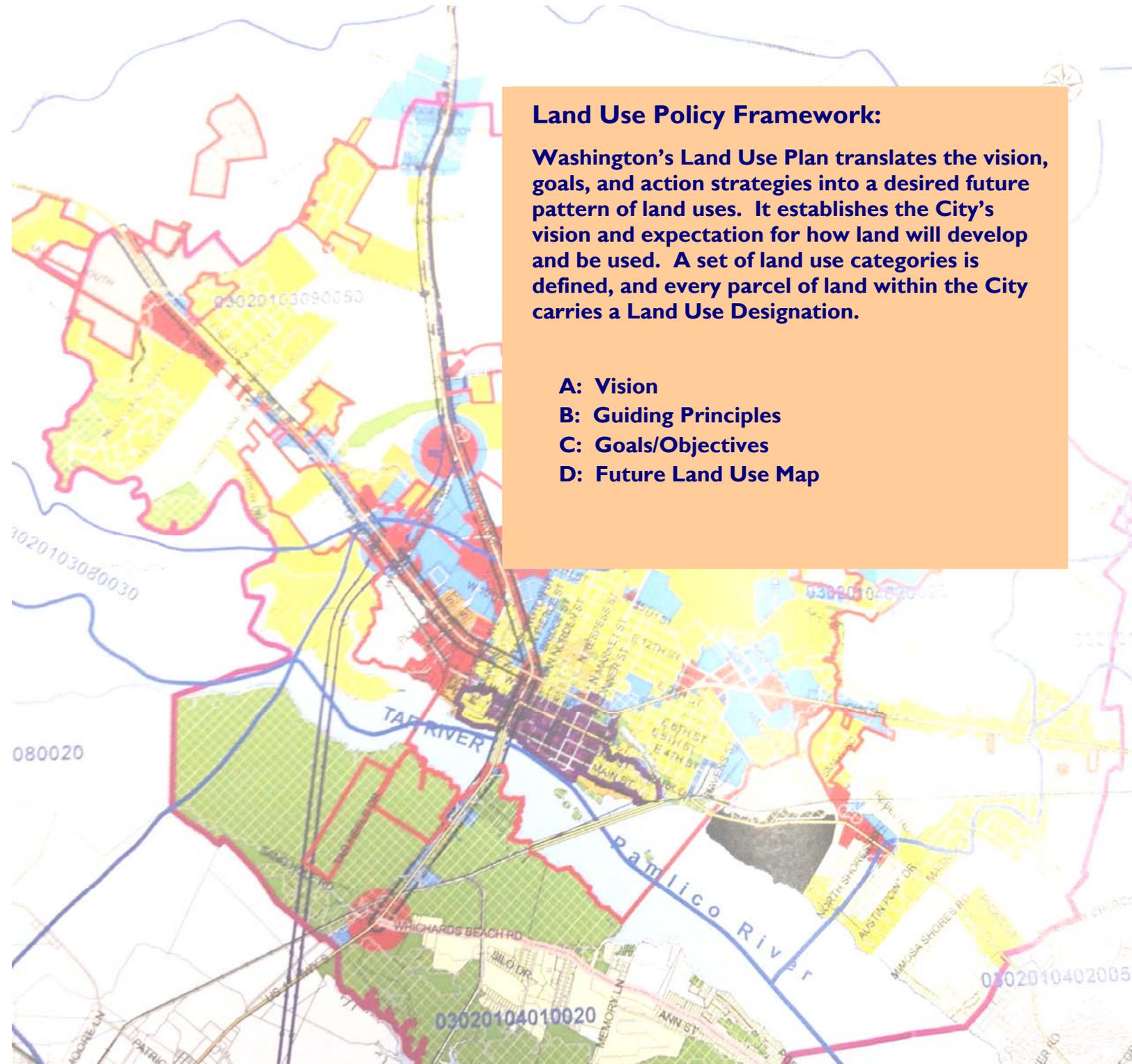
## SECTION III:

# LAND USE POLICY FRAMEWORK

### Land Use Policy Framework:

Washington's Land Use Plan translates the vision, goals, and action strategies into a desired future pattern of land uses. It establishes the City's vision and expectation for how land will develop and be used. A set of land use categories is defined, and every parcel of land within the City carries a Land Use Designation.

- A: Vision**
- B: Guiding Principles**
- C: Goals/Objectives**
- D: Future Land Use Map**



## A. Vision

Washington's Land Use Plan has been and will be an important policy document for the City, reflecting a blend of existing land use patterns and goals for future land use. The Land Use Plan is the foundation for projecting future population and employment growth, expected traffic patterns, and future infrastructure needs. The vision for the future of this community, the end state to which citizens aspire, can be expressed as follows:

We see Washington as a historically rich and presently vibrant community, situated at the key location of the joining of the Tar and Pamlico rivers. Recognizing and respecting the heritage and culture, Washington citizens enjoy a high quality of life and look to the future with pride and enthusiasm. Redevelopment of the downtown and waterfront areas has turned this historic area into a modern-day center of commerce, leisure, arts, and entertainment. Retail businesses and services are convenient in multiple locations. A diversity of neighborhoods and housing styles provides a connected community fabric. It is easy and pleasant to walk and bike around the City. Eco-tourism brings visitors and energy to the City, as residents share the richness of this place with others. Local businesses provide goods and services and are successful. And all of this takes place within the context of a natural environment that is being protected so that it can continue to contribute to the lives of future generations of Washington residents. This is a City that has pride in its past, and faith in its future.

## B. Guiding Principles

Supplementing the vision is a set of Guiding Principles that capture the main messages and values that are expressed in the various plans and policies for the City of Washington. Eleven overarching land use principles serve as a guide for future development and inform decision-making:

### 1. **PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT**

Public investments should be targeted to the waterfront area to accomplish desirable infrastructure, pedestrian amenities, parking, lighting, and walking paths, in combination with encouragement of private development activity oriented toward the waterfront.

**2. PROMOTE DOWNTOWN AS THE TOURISM AND RECREATION CENTER OF WASHINGTON**

Public investments should be targeted to the downtown area to continue emphasis on downtown as the heart of the community, with multiple community events and celebrations on an ongoing basis, in cooperation with multiple organizations.

**3. FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY**

Infrastructure and development decisions should be focused on creating new opportunities that advance economic development efforts and lead to local job creation.

**4. PROTECT/ENHANCE HISTORIC AREAS AND STRUCTURES**

Continue to emphasize the value of Washington's historic culture and structures as defining components of the community's identity.

**5. PROTECT/ENHANCE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

Continue to encourage and support neighborhood organizations, along with attention to development regulations to help ensure neighborhood preservation as development and redevelopment occur in the community.

**6. PROTECT THE RIVERFRONT SHORELINE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Continue to enforce environmental regulations to help maintain the quality and integrity of Washington's many aquatic resources. Explore additional opportunities to promote eco-tourism as a means of encouraging visitors, recreation, and tourism while simultaneously raising attention to the community importance of environmental protection.

**7. PROVIDE WALKING AND BIKING OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY**

In addition to pursuing planned investments in streets and roads, increase attention to options that serve non-automobile mobility. Construct additional pedestrian walkways, especially connecting downtown to the waterfront, that will promote pedestrian activity.

**8. MAINTAIN FISCAL HEALTH OF GOVERNMENTS WHILE ENCOURAGING GROWTH THAT PAYS FOR ITSELF**

Assure that the fiscal health of the City is maintained/enhanced, not damaged, as growth occurs. The costs of providing public services to growing areas (both initial capital and ongoing operational costs) shall be sufficiently accounted for through appropriate funding mechanisms.

**9. ENCOURAGE QUALITY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES THAT ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO KEY COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND MAJOR GATEWAYS**

As The City of Washington grows, special attention should be paid to encouraging and requiring quality design in new development that enhances the visual character of the City, especially along key corridors and at gateway entrances to the City.

**10. PLAN FOR EXPANSION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES ACCORDING TO A SCHEDULE THAT WILL SATISFY DEMANDS IN A FISCALLY EFFICIENT MANNER**

The City of Washington shall provide the full range of basic public facilities and services needed for modern urban life: a top quality educational system, public safety services, parks and recreation, and others.

**11. PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION REGARDING FUTURE TRANSPORTATION EFFORTS IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON**

Ensure a balanced and efficient transportation system serving Washington that will shape and serve growth areas and provide a safe, efficient transportation system.

## C. Goals/Objectives

### *Key Elements of the Plan*

The Washington Comprehensive Land Use Plan Framework consists of the essential elements of the plan that will guide future decision-making by the City. The plan framework includes the City's vision statement, goals, objectives, and specific action strategies. These elements work together in a structured hierarchy to describe different levels of community planning guidance:

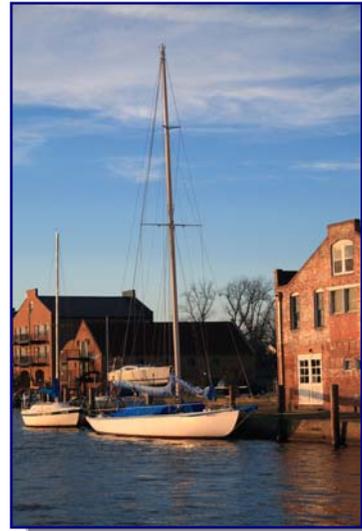
***Community Vision Statement:*** A Community Vision Statement describes the community's aspirations for Washington in 2023. This vision statement articulates an end state that the City will strive to achieve in future years.

***Goals:*** Goals are statements about what the City aims to achieve over the next 10 years. Goals give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the City's intended direction.

***Objectives:*** Objectives provide more specific guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments in the City.

***Action Strategies:*** Action Strategies provide specific action steps for achieving objectives.

Following are a set of Goals and Objectives for the City of Washington, organized according to the ten major issue areas, to help guide the City toward achieving its vision.



### ISSUE I: DOWNTOWN / WATERFRONT

**Downtown / Waterfront Goal 1:** The character of Washington’s historic area and city center environment will be protected and enhanced to preserve our sense of place, promote economic strength, and ensure the city’s continuing appeal to residents, business people, and visitors.

- Continue to invest in downtown streetscape amenities to enhance the pedestrian experience and celebrate downtown vitality.
- Assure the provision of public and private parking in support of increased development and activity.
- Implement the City of Washington Visualization and Reinvestments Strategy using the suggested phasing approach identified in the strategy.
- Establish a program to conduct routine maintenance on public infrastructure in the waterfront and downtown areas to ensure longevity of these investments over time.
- Establish a formal security program to protect existing public infrastructure, such as the Festival Park and the promenade.
- Improve the aesthetic experience of the community gateway to downtown at Main and Gladden.



**Downtown / Waterfront Goal 2:** The core downtown area will continue to serve as a center of commerce, culture, and community, and will increasingly generate revenues to ensure the economic stability and longevity of the City.

- Continue to work with the Washington-Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce, the Beaufort County Economic Development Commission, the Washington Harbor District Alliance, the Main Street Organization, and the Arts Council to establish downtown as an enticing place for shoppers, investors and visitors.
- Increase and bolster the number of key destinations near the downtown and waterfront to provide multiple components and uses catering to different audiences.
- Seek out opportunities to enhance downtown as a center of arts and cultural resources. Promote efforts to enhance the visibility and use of the historic Turnage Theater.
- Increase public infrastructure to serve perennial events, such as the Farmers Market and concerts at Festival Park.

**Downtown / Waterfront Goal 3:** The city will continue to capitalize on the Tar and Pamlico Rivers as community amenities for enjoyment by residents and visitors.

- Continue to build partnerships to create a consistent revitalization program and develop effective management and leadership downtown.
- Expand municipal boat slips along with successful managing and marketing.

**Downtown / Waterfront Goal 4:** The redevelopment and revitalization of the waterfront area will result in an engine of commerce for the City.

- Continue to work with and support the Washington Harbor District Alliance as a primary organization focused on reviving the downtown Washington Harbor District.
- Create a Downtown Waterfront Master Plan to guide redevelopment and revitalization efforts, and to address public access to water, need for new boat slips, community art, boater amenities, and alleyway improvements.
- Design and construct wayfinding signage to orient visitors within the downtown and waterfront areas and to identify key destinations and attractions.

**Downtown / Waterfront Goal 5:** The redevelopment and revitalization of the waterfront area will consist of buildings and structures that set a highly appealing tone for the character of downtown and the waterfront.

- Improve community and public access between downtown users and the water’s edge by allowing improved access corridors, expanding the public promenade and providing zones where people can walk to the water.
- Work with the Waterfront Harbor District Alliance to attract a hotel developer to the downtown-waterfront district.



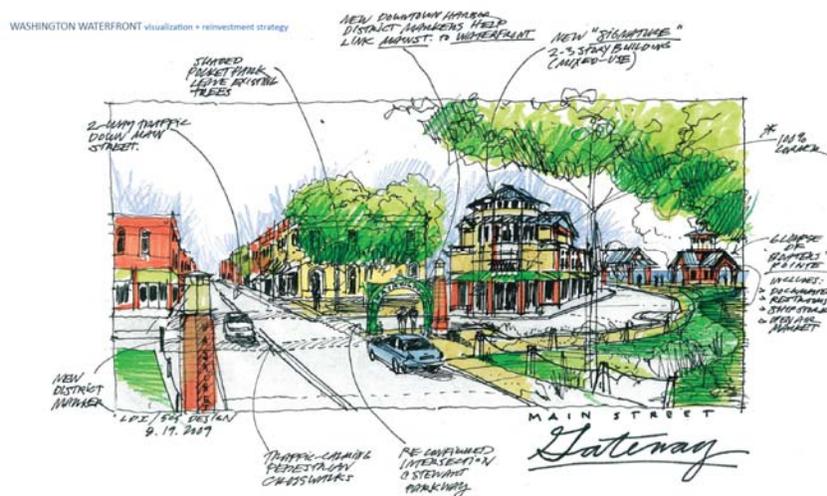
**ISSUE 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Economic Development Goal 1:** Washington will have a strong and diverse economy, providing quality jobs, and generating local government revenues that allow for the continued provision of quality public services and facilities.

- Strengthen the existing economic assets of the City while diversifying the economic base.
- Partner with the Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce, the Beaufort County Economic Development Commission, and the Waterfront Harbor District Alliance to recruit new businesses.

**Economic Development Goal 2:** Washington will be a community that is friendly to local businesses and that provides a variety of employment opportunities to the local workforce.

- Review City regulations and procedures to assure a business-friendly process to new business development.



Source of Graphic: Washington Visualization and Reinvestments Strategy

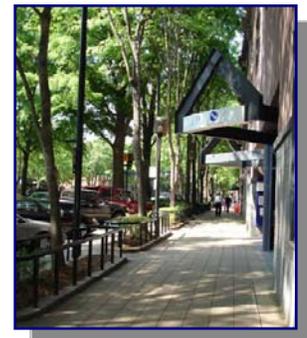
### ISSUE 3: COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

**Community Appearance Goal 1:** Gateways and entrances to the City will be enhanced with landscaping and signage in a manner that announces entrance to the community and welcomes visitors.

- Identify strategic gateway locations at the entrances to Washington and to the downtown areas along key corridors. Prepare designs for public improvements, entry signage, wayfinding signage, and landscaping.

**Community Appearance Goal 2:** Road corridors and streetscapes in strategic locations will be landscaped, with attention to lighting and public improvements that add visual character to the corridors, in addition to ongoing attention to road maintenance.

- Identify a long-term phasing plan for streetscape improvements along strategic public corridors into and within the City. Establish priorities and timetables for pursuing improvements, along with phased public investment in the improvements. Arrange for overhead utility lines to be placed underground wherever feasible.



**Community Appearance Goal 3:** New development and redevelopment in the City will incorporate high standards of design that enhance the visual character of the community.

- Prepare / enhance Design Guidelines to establish expectations regarding the form of new development and redevelopment of structures within the City. Emphasize blending with existing context and consistency with City character.



#### ISSUE 4: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**Historic Preservation Goal 1:** The City of Washington will continue to recognize, protect, and interpret significant architectural, historical, and archaeological resources that are part of the community's heritage, including preservation of a locally designated Historic District, and a series of individual structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Continue to promote and publicize the public and private benefits of historic preservation in the Community.

**Historic Preservation Goal 2:** Washington's cultural heritage will be preserved in a manner that enhances the active connection between residents and the city's past, and provides visitors of the city with an authentic historical experience.

- Encourage re-use of vintage buildings for residential and non-residential purposes, to avoid demolition.

**Historic Preservation Goal 3:** The City of Washington will encourage repair and pursue abatement of nuisances for historic structures that have been neglected.

- Promote maintenance and abate nuisances caused by neglect.



## ISSUE 5: TOURISM AND ECO-TOURISM

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism Goal 1:** The City of Washington will be a travel and tourism destination of choice, drawing upon interest in historic and natural features to attract visitors and contribute to the local economy.

- Identify new opportunities to attract recreational boaters and outdoor activity.
- Seek ways to enhance tourism dollars.
- Modify the current regulation that prohibits commercial use of public docks, so as to permit commercial eco-tourism uses.

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism Goal 2:** Washington will protect the City's natural resources and community character, while simultaneously achieving a vibrancy in downtown and waterfront areas that complements the existing historic forms.

- Assure that as changes are planned for improvements to the downtown and especially the waterfront area, that consideration is given to access issues and to environmentally-friendly building techniques.
- Increase public access to water.

**Tourism and Eco-Tourism Goal 3:** The City of Washington will be a center of walking, biking, boating, and fishing activities that promote appreciation, preservation, and use of environmentally sensitive land and water features in and surrounding the City.

- Continue to pursue construction of greenways and walking trails.
- Expand the City's inventory of boat slips.
- Consider creation of a Conservation Overlay Zoning District to help protect sensitive areas.

- Improve the infrastructure at City boat docks to increase visitation. Infrastructure improvement to include picnic tables, benches, boater bathrooms, a dock attendant’s station, and other amenities near public ramps and waterfront destinations.
- Provide non-motorized craft access ramps to encourage safe access for paddlers.
- Improve community access to water by developing a community pier.



## ISSUE 6: TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 1:** Advance the development of a transportation system that is safe, functional, and attractive for users of all modes of transportation, and makes the community accessible to all citizens.

- Support the development and implementation of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Transportation Plan – place priority projects on the City and County TIP and identify preferred routes.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 2:** Provide and encourage safe, convenient, and efficient opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle movement.

- Implement design improvements for a city bikeway, bike lanes, wider travel lanes, wider shoulders, and signage for local roadways.
- Apply for NCDOT pedestrian and bicycle grants in order to plan safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Budget funds annually to complete priority segments that connect the residential and commercial areas of the City in accordance with the Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 3:** Make Washington a walkable city.

- Encourage walking by developing educational programs that increases public awareness of the benefits of walking and by supporting and participating in events for pedestrians.
- Ensure that convenient and safe pedestrian access is provided between adjacent neighborhoods.
- Develop and implement a system for providing and maintaining crosswalks at every pedestrian path and street crossing, as well as at other strategic and appropriate midblock locations.



**Transportation and Mobility Goal 4:** Reduce existing traffic congestion and safety problems.

- Work to provide adequate maintenance of roads – Identify priorities for needed maintenance and work with transportation agencies (NCDOT & Public Works) to secure funding for improvements.

**Transportation and Mobility Goal 5:** Ensure that new development improves, not worsens, traffic and safety concerns, and is sensitive to environmental concerns.

- Create Better Connectivity and Accessibility within New Developments – consider development of access and circulation standards for new commercial and mixed use developments.
- Access from to main roadways should be limited to reduce conflicts associated with vehicle turning movements.

**ISSUE 7: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Public Facilities & Services Goal 1:** The City’s public services will be provided in an efficient and effective manner to all residents of the City.

- Ensure that fire and EMS, police, and other community facilities and services are sized, located, and managed to protect the environment while providing adequate levels of service to meet the needs of citizens.
- Provide public information and public services in an efficient and effective manner that maximizes information technology opportunities and provides the City’s residents with easy access to public information.



**Public Facilities & Services Goal 2:** Washington will provide a safe and secure environment for those who live, work, and visit the City through high quality public safety facilities and systems.

- Provide efficient, cost-effective facilities for Police Department Operations.
- Identify innovative solutions to future public safety needs.
- Continue community policing strategies to prevent crime.
- Provide for expansion of staff and facilities to meet future community needs for police protection and services. Upgrade police facilities and take other action as necessary to meet community protection needs.

**Public Facilities & Services Goal 3:** The Beaufort County School System will continue to provide an exceptional education to the City’s students.

- The City of Washington will continue to support a high quality public education experience to the City’s student population.
- Select sites for additional public school facilities that are consistent with City land use plans and policies.

**Public Facilities & Services Goal 4:** The City's parks and open space facilities, as well as recreational programming, will meet the needs of the full community, including families, youth, seniors, and citizens with special needs.

- Perform an assessment within the City limits of all current and potential locations for parks, playgrounds, open space, and needed amenities therein.
- Develop and implement a plan to meet future community needs for park and recreational facilities.
- Evaluate park facilities to determine usage and redesign or replace underutilized facilities. Community preferences change with time and demographic change, so some recreational facilities may no longer be needed. Replacement of these facilities with popular amenities, such as dog parks, will save valuable parkland and prevent wasted maintenance expenses. The evaluation of facilities should be integrated as a component of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Develop a wide variety of both passive and active recreation programming reflective of the interests of the citizens of Washington.
- Consider pursuing a payment-in-lieu of providing open space/parks within new residential developments as an option for developments occurring outside of targeted development. The purpose is to use these resources to develop larger community-serving parks.

**Public Facilities & Services Goal 5:** The City will meet or exceed State requirements to improve water quality and help assure a safe drinking water supply, including implementing best management practices for stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and improving treatment of wastewater.

- Improve the City's wastewater treatment service to a level that meets/exceeds federal standards.
- Strengthen controls on development within flood-prone and wetland areas by improving existing ordinances, such as the erosion and sediment control ordinance, zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, flood plain regulations and other development regulations.
- Establish priorities for future public services and establish future capital improvement priorities.

**Public Facilities & Services Goal 6:** Public facilities and publicly owned lands will be used at their highest and best use, except for those public lands that are in environmentally sensitive locations, where conservation should be the objective.

- Continuously work to identify the most appropriate use for existing public lands.
- Explore options for incorporating LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards set by the Green Building Council into planning and construction for all new public facilities.
- Support development of local eco-tourism and water recreation opportunities by providing additional public access points and infrastructure for boaters and citizens.

**Public Facilities & Services Goal 7:** Provide Adequate Fire, Police and Emergency Service in all incorporated and response areas of the City.

- To continue to develop a stronger, more comprehensive Fire and Rescue training and safety program for improved Departmental functioning and community service.
- To provide firefighting facilities which offer maximum protection and services to the citizens of Washington.

**ISSUE 8: COMMERCIAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS**

**Commercial Business Districts Goal 1:** The commercial business districts will provide high quality shopping and entertainment opportunities to the City and region for the long-term future.



- Improve commercial zoning standards during future updates to the City’s development regulations. Standards could include building heights, setbacks, density ground floor uses, floor area ratios, building materials, permitted special exceptions, and other design standards.
- Implement state-of-the-art development standards for new development and redevelopment related to site layout, building configuration, landscaping, signage, parking lot design and layout, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, stormwater management, environmental protection, and others.

- Provide adequate public facilities, such as roads and sidewalks to support the economic viability of the area.

**Commercial Business Districts Goal 2:** The commercial business districts will continue to provide a strong economic benefit to the City for the long-term future.

- Promote the inclusion of business owners in local economic development activities and monitoring.
- Create conditions favorable for healthy economic expansion in the area.
- Create a targeted list of business prospects for recruitment.

**Commercial Business Districts Goal 3:** New commercial business districts will complement the downtown and business corridors and will contain a mix of retail businesses, offices, restaurants, and entertainment/education facilities that offer a wide variety of goods, services, and jobs to residents.

- Attract new industry and businesses to strengthen Washington's role as a commercial activity center.
- Consider providing incentives for new commercial and mixed use developments located in development areas.

## ISSUE 9: HOUSING

**Housing Goal 1:** Promote an adequate supply of safe, affordable, and suitable housing options for residents.

- The City will work with the Washington Housing Authority and appropriate federal and state agencies in identifying and providing for housing at various rent and price ranges to ensure low and moderate income needs are appropriately addressed.
- Improve and revitalize existing neighborhoods.



**Housing Goal 2:** All persons who live and work in Washington should have the opportunity to rent or purchase safe, decent, accessible, and affordable housing.

- Ensure residential rental properties are properly maintained in a condition that is safe and sanitary.
- Eliminate vacant and abandoned housing through aggressive property maintenance standards.
- Enforce the City's minimum housing code to ensure that all occupied structures are fit for human habitation.

**Housing Goal 3:** Washington will provide a variety of housing opportunities throughout the City, both in terms of the housing type and the price of housing, that respect the existing character of the community.

- Promote the development of a variety of housing types (e.g., single-family units, townhouses, loft apartments, accessory apartments, etc.) throughout the City, while promoting homeownership.

**Housing Goal 4:** Homeownership in Washington should be encouraged and opportunities sought to increase homeownership.

- Develop strategies that increase homeownership opportunities while also ensuring the City achieves an appropriate balance of other housing choices (rental housing, housing for the aged, etc.).
- To identify innovative pre- and post- home ownership programs for low-income home buyers and home owners.

**Housing Goal 5:** The City's housing stock will be maintained, protected, and expanded to ensure an adequate supply of housing for future generations.

- Maintain the supply of affordable housing through rehabilitation of existing owner occupied housing, and improve the physical quality of housing and neighborhoods through appropriate community development programs.



## ISSUE 10: NEIGHBORHOODS

**Neighborhoods Goal 1:** Preserve the character of the City's existing neighborhoods.

- Neighborhoods are the critical building blocks of our community and should be planned, developed, enhanced, and protected.

**Neighborhoods Goal 2:** Enhance the quality of the City's residential neighborhoods to promote livability and a strong sense of community.

- Neighborhoods are our barometer on quality of life issues.
- To ensure that Washington neighborhoods are safe and secure Community Oriented Policing shall be available to all neighborhoods.

**Neighborhoods Goal 3:** The residential areas of the City will comprise a collection of distinct and attractive neighborhoods, each possessing a unique sense of place and shared identity.

- Develop a Neighborhood Planning Handbook establishing acceptable planning guidelines and standards for all neighborhoods to develop appropriate plans on their own or with outside facilitation.

**Neighborhoods Goal 4:** The residential neighborhoods will be adequately served with efficient transportation, parking, sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and other public facilities that are compatible with their neighborhood scale.

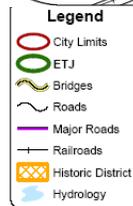
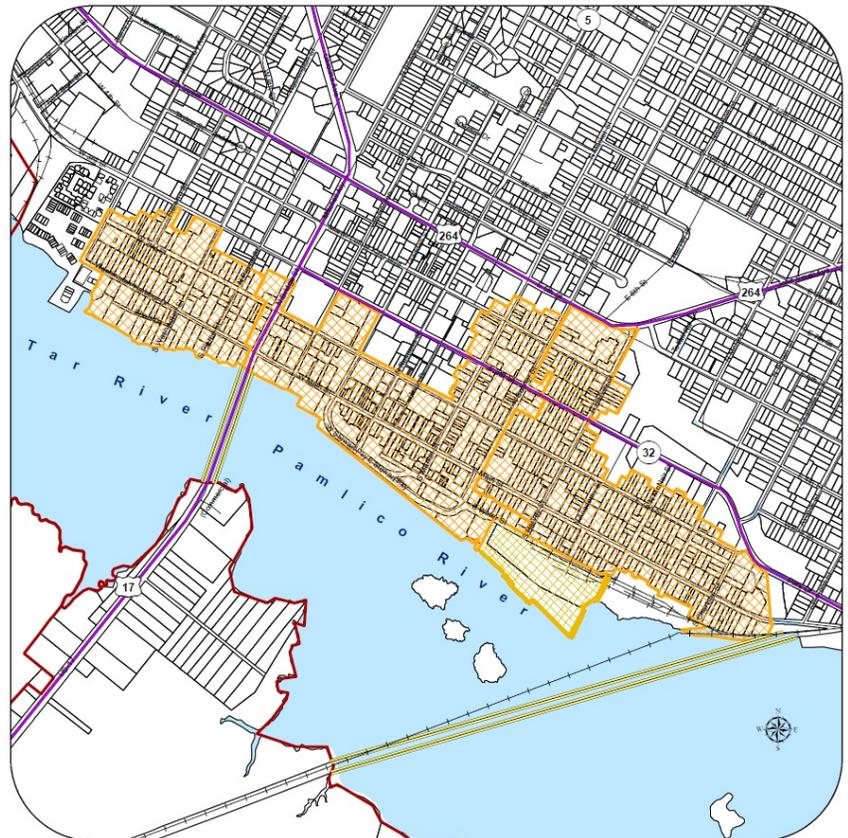
- Existing and future neighborhoods shall be planned with "adequate" infrastructure improvements including sewer, water, electrical, communication, drainage, streets, and parks.

# D. Future Land Use Map

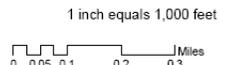
Washington’s Land Use Plan has been an important policy document for the City, reflecting a blend of existing land use patterns and goals for future land use. The Land Use Plan is the foundation for projecting future population and employment growth, expected traffic patterns, and future infrastructure needs.

Three maps tell this story of what the land use implications are of the ideas and objectives contained in this Comprehensive Plan. To the right is a map showing one of the main pieces of geography in the City of Washington, the Historic District (excerpt from the CAMA Core Land Use Plan, prepared by Holland Consulting Planners, Inc.). In the Map Appendix at the end of this Plan there are two more key maps: Map #6 illustrates desired future land use patterns for the entire City and its Planning Area; Map #7 is an enlargement of the Future Land Use map for the downtown and waterfront areas specifically.

The Future Land Use Plan is a key component of the City’s Updated Comprehensive Plan, and should be referred to and used as a guide to decision-making when land use and zoning decisions are under consideration by the City.



The City of Washington planning area includes all areas within the corporate limits of the city and its ETJ.



The preparation of this map was financed in part through a grant provided by the North Carolina Coastal Management Program, through funds provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, which is administered by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



**Map 5: Washington  
Land Use Plan**  
*Historic District*

## SECTION IV: ACTION PLAN



### **Action Plan:**

**Given Washington's vision for its future, and the description/analysis of current conditions and strategic objectives, the path to that future begins to come into focus. This Part IV includes a specific Action Plan with priorities.**

- A: What Needs to be Done**
- B: Priority Designations**
- C: Plan Monitoring and Updating**

## A. What Needs to be Done

Beginning on page 54 is a list of specific actions that should be considered to help promote the goals identified in this Comprehensive Plan. More initiatives may be added as discussion of the Plan continues and opportunities emerge. This list is intended to facilitate discussion, priority-setting, and action on high-priority initiatives.

## B. Priority Designations

All the goals and related initiatives are important. However, it is not possible to do everything at once, and gaining consensus and support behind the most compelling ideas will contribute to the likelihood of success. Accordingly, this Comprehensive Plan concludes with identification of the most compelling and time-sensitive initiatives for immediate attention.

The initiatives that should be pursued first, with appropriate dedication of resources, are:

1. Supporting efforts to promote the Downtown/Waterfront areas;
2. Actions that are feasible, inexpensive, and relatively easy to complete quickly; and
3. New opportunities to implement and pursue medium- and long-term ideas.

The following tables list Action Steps that should be pursued, with indications of priority. Following are definitions of the priority designations:

- **Top Priority Initiatives** should be initiated upon adoption of the Plan and should be well underway within two years of Plan adoption.
- **Ongoing Initiatives** are existing projects or actions that should continue to be a priority for the City.
- **Initiatives that Need Attention** are important actions which should be pursued as resources and circumstances permit.

## C. Monitoring / Updating

This 2023 Comprehensive Plan gathers and updates information for the City of Washington, and also summarizes the status of other ongoing planning related initiatives. There is a great deal of energy and investment in Washington. It is helpful to have an umbrella document that considers all current and best thoughts about future possibilities for the City. Accordingly, it is also important to periodically update the data and information that make up this overall policy framework for Washington. The suggestion here is that the City set a schedule of revisiting the Comprehensive Plan every five years, with a monitoring report delivered to the City Council annually to describe what actions were undertaken during the prior 12 months, what steps were completed, what circumstances have changed (if any), along with suggestions for priorities during the upcoming 12 months.

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 1: Downtown / Waterfront</b>			
1	Install more streetscape amenities downtown.	Medium	
2	Modify the City's development regulations to permit commercial use of public docks.	Short	
3	Provide more and wider pedestrian connections between downtown and the waterfront.	Medium	
4	Increase and bolster the number of activity centers / key destinations near the downtown and waterfront.	Long	
5	Develop a formal public infrastructure maintenance program.	Medium	
6	Expand the number of municipal boat slips along with aggressive marketing and management. Provide additional infrastructure at docks, such as picnic tables, benches, boater bathrooms and a dock attendant's station.	Medium	
7	Create a Waterfront Master Plan to address access to water, boat slips, community art, and boater amenities.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 1: Downtown / Waterfront</b>			
8	Implement the City of Washington Visualization and Reinvestments Strategy, by using the phasing approach outlined in the strategy document.	Short-Term, Ongoing	
9	Expanding policing programs to enhance protection of existing public infrastructure, such as the Festival Park and the promenade.	Short	
10	Develop a strategy for improving the City's community gateway at Main St. and Bridge St	Long	
11	Promote efforts to enhance the visibility and use of the Turnage Theater.	Ongoing	
12	Increase public infrastructure to serve perennial events, such as the Farmers Market and Festival Park. Work with the Waterfront Harbor District Alliance to identify infrastructure needs.	Long	
13	Design and construct wayfinding signage in downtown and the waterfront area.	Medium	
14	Work with the WHDA to attract a hotel developer to downtown.	Long	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 2: Economic Development</b>			
1	Diversify the City's existing economic base.	Long	
2	Recruit new businesses.	Medium	
3	Review / Adjust regulations and procedures to be as business-friendly as possible.	Short	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 3: Community Appearance</b>			
1	Identify strategic gateway locations and prepare plans to enhance. A priority shall be the gateway at Main St. and Bridge St.	Short	
2	Prepare a coordinated wayfinding sign system to post at gateways and around downtown.	Medium	
3	Prepare plans for additional streetscape improvements along key corridors.	Medium	
4	Pursue initiatives to relocate overhead utility lines underground in strategic corridors.	Medium	
5	Enhance regulations and guidelines for design of new buildings.	Short	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 4: Historic Preservation</b>			
1	Expand efforts to promote and publicize benefits of historic preservation to property owners and the community.	Short	
2	Adopt policies and create incentives to encourage re-use of vintage buildings.	Short	
3	Create a strategy for demolishing old structures that cannot feasibly be brought back to use.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 5: Tourism and Eco-Tourism</b>			
1	Identify new opportunities to attract recreational boaters and outdoor activity.	Medium	
2	Review regulations and procedures to assure consideration to access issues as improvements are planned in the waterfront area.	Short	
3	Continue to pursue construction of greenways and walking trails throughout the community.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 5: Tourism and Eco-Tourism</b>			
4	Expand the City's inventory of boat slips, and improve infrastructure at new and existing boat docks to include picnic tables, benches, boater bathrooms, a dock attendant's station, and other amenities.	Medium	
5	Provide non-motorized craft access ramps to encourage safe access for paddlers.	Medium	
6	Improve community access to water by developing a community pier.	Long	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 6: Transportation and Mobility</b>			
1	Support the development and implementation of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Transportation Plan – place priority projects on the City and County TIP and identify preferred routes.	Short	
2	Implement design improvements for a city bikeway, bike lanes, wider travel lanes, wider shoulders, and signage for local roadways.	Medium	
3	Apply for NCDOT pedestrian and bicycle grants in order to plan safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 6: Transportation and Mobility</b>			
4	Budget funds annually to complete priority segments that connect the residential and commercial areas of the City in accordance with the Pedestrian Master Plan.	Short	
5	Encourage walking by developing educational programs that increases public awareness of the benefits of walking and by supporting and participating in events for pedestrians.	Short	
6	Ensure that convenient and safe pedestrian access is provided between adjacent neighborhoods.	Medium	
7	Develop and implement a system for providing and maintaining crosswalks at every pedestrian path and street crossing, as well as at other strategic and appropriate midblock locations.	Medium	
8	Work to provide adequate maintenance of roads – Identify priorities for needed maintenance and work with transportation agencies (NCDOT & Public Works) to secure funding for improvements	Medium	
9	Create Better Connectivity and Accessibility within New Developments – consider development of access and circulation standards for new commercial and mixed use developments.	Medium	
10	Access from to main roadways should be limited to reduce conflicts associated with vehicle turning movements.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 7: Public Facilities and Services</b>			
1	Ensure that fire and EMS, police, and other community facilities and services are sized, located, and managed to protect the environment while providing adequate levels of service to meet the needs of citizens.	Medium	
2	Provide public information and public services in an efficient and effective manner that maximizes information technology opportunities and provides the City’s residents with easy access to public information.	Short	
3	Provide efficient, cost-effective facilities for Police Department Operations.	Short	
4	Identify innovative solutions to future public safety needs.	Medium	
5	Continue community policing strategies to prevent crime.	Short	
6	Provide for expansion of staff and facilities to meet future community needs for police protection and services. Upgrade police facilities and take other action as necessary to meet community protection needs.	Medium	
7	The City of Washington will continue to support a high quality public education experience to the City’s student population.	Medium	
8	Select sites for additional public school facilities that are consistent with City land use plans and policies.	Long	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 7: Public Facilities and Services</b>			
9	Perform an assessment within the City limits of all current and potential locations for parks, playgrounds, open space, and needed amenities therein.	Long	
10	Develop and implement a plan to meet future community needs for park and recreational facilities.	Long	
11	Evaluate park facilities to determine usage and redesign or replace underutilized facilities. Community preferences change with time and demographic change, so some recreational facilities may no longer be needed. Replacement of these facilities with popular amenities, such as dog parks, will save valuable parkland and prevent wasted maintenance expenses. The evaluation of facilities should be integrated as a component of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	Medium	
12	Develop a wide variety of both passive and active recreation programming reflective of the interests of the citizens of Washington.	Medium	
13	Consider pursuing a payment-in-lieu of providing open space/parks within new residential developments as an option for developments occurring outside of targeted development. The purpose is to use these resources to develop larger community-serving parks.	Medium	
14	Improve the City's wastewater treatment service to a level that meets/exceeds federal standards.	Long	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 7: Public Facilities and Services</b>			
15	Strengthen controls on development within flood-prone and wetland areas by improving existing ordinances, such as the erosion and sediment control ordinance, zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, flood plain regulations and other development regulations.	Medium	
16	Establish priorities for future public services and establish future capital improvement priorities.	Short	
17	Continuously work to identify the most appropriate use for existing public lands.	Medium	
18	Explore options for incorporating LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards set by the Green Building Council into planning and construction for all new public facilities.	Medium	
19	Support development of local eco-tourism and water recreation opportunities by providing additional public access points and infrastructure for boaters and citizens.	Medium	
20	Continue to develop a stronger, more comprehensive Fire and Rescue training and safety program for improved Departmental functioning and community service.	Short	
21	Provide firefighting facilities which offer maximum protection and services to the citizens of Washington.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 8: Commercial Business Districts</b>			
1	Improve commercial zoning standards during future updates to the City's development regulations. Standards could include building heights, setbacks, density ground floor uses, floor area ratios, building materials, permitted special exceptions, and other design standards.	Medium	
2	Implement state-of-the-art development standards for new development and redevelopment related to site layout, building configuration, landscaping, signage, parking lot design and layout, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, stormwater management, environmental protection, and others.	Medium	
3	Provide adequate public facilities, such as roads and sidewalks to support the economic viability of the area.	Long	
4	Promote the inclusion of business owners in local economic development activities and monitoring.	Short	
5	Create conditions favorable for healthy economic expansion in the area.	Long	
6	Create a targeted list of business prospects for recruitment.	Ongoing	
7	Attract new industry and businesses to strengthen Washington's role as a commercial activity center.	Medium	
8	Consider providing incentives for new commercial and mixed use developments located in development areas.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 9: Housing</b>			
1	The City will work with the Washington Housing Authority and appropriate federal and state agencies in identifying and providing for housing at various rent and price ranges to ensure low and moderate income needs are appropriately addressed.	Medium	
2	Improve and revitalize existing neighborhoods.	Medium	
3	Ensure residential rental properties are properly maintained in a condition that is safe and sanitary.	Short	
4	Eliminate vacant and abandoned housing through aggressive property maintenance standards.	Medium	
5	Enforce the City's minimum housing code to ensure that all occupied structures are fit for human habitation.	Short	
6	Promote the development of a variety of housing types (e.g., single-family units, townhouses, loft apartments, accessory apartments, etc.) throughout the City, while promoting homeownership.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 9: Housing</b>			
7	Develop strategies that increase homeownership opportunities while also ensuring the City achieves an appropriate balance of other housing choices (rental housing, housing for the aged, etc.).	Medium	
8	To identify innovative pre- and post-home ownership programs for low-income home buyers and home owners.	Short	
9	Maintain the supply of affordable housing through rehabilitation of existing owner occupied housing, and improve the physical quality of housing and neighborhoods through appropriate community development programs.	Medium	

Issue	Action Step	Short, Medium, Long Term	Priority
<b>Issue 10: Neighborhoods</b>			
1	Neighborhoods are the critical building blocks of our community and should be planned, developed, enhanced, and protected.	Medium	
2	Neighborhoods are our barometer on quality of life issues.	Medium	
3	To ensure that Washington neighborhoods are safe and secure Community Oriented Policing shall be available to all neighborhoods.	Short	
4	Develop a Neighborhood Planning Handbook establishing acceptable planning guidelines and standards for all neighborhoods to develop appropriate plans on their own or with outside facilitation.	Short	
5	Existing and future neighborhoods shall be planned with "adequate" infrastructure improvements including sewer, water, electrical, communication, drainage, streets, and parks.	Ongoing	



# MAP APPENDIX

## Maps:

Maps that are referenced in the text of this Comprehensive Plan appear in this Map Appendix as follows:

- Map 2: Planning Area with Zoning**
- Map 3: Environmental Composite**
- Map 3A: Flood Hazard Areas**
- Map 4: Current Land Use - Citywide**
- Map 4A: Current Land Use-Downtown**
- Map 6: Future Land Use – Citywide**
- Map 7: Future Land Use – Downtown**

# Map 2: City of Washington Comprehensive Plan

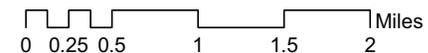
## Zoning Districts

### Legend

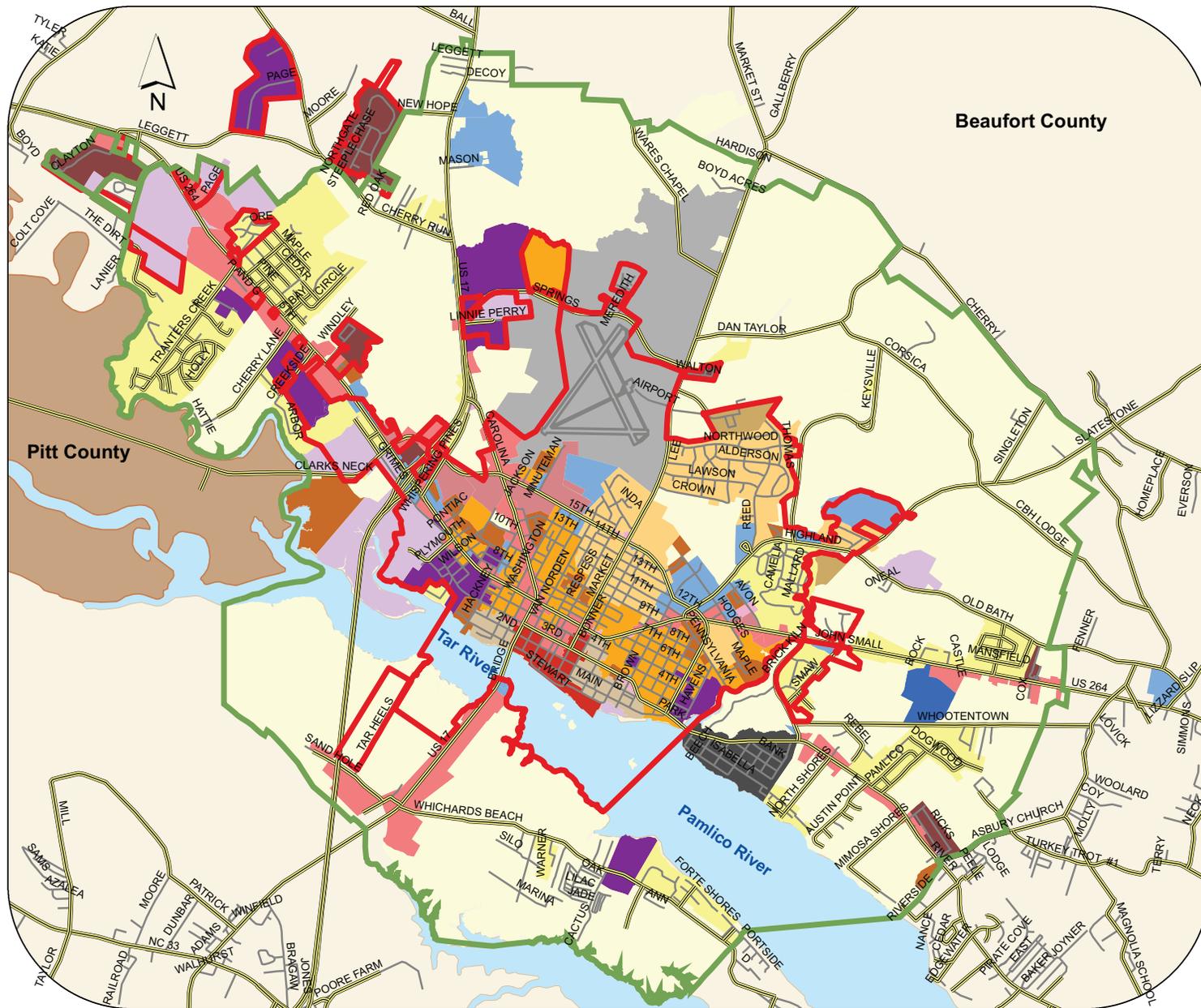
- Airport
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- City of Washington Corporate Limits
- DOT Major Roads
- Roads
- Parcels
- Beaufort County
- Pitt County
- Town of Washington Park

### Zoning Districts

- |      |     |
|------|-----|
| RA20 | O&I |
| R15S | B1H |
| R9S  | B2  |
| R6S  | B3  |
| RMF  | B4  |
| RMH  | I1  |
| RHD  | I2  |
| PUD  | CP  |
|      | AP  |



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May 2012



# City of Washington Land Use Plan

## Environmental Composite

**Legend**

-  City Limits
-  ETJ
-  Pitt County
-  Washington Park Planning Area
-  Airport
-  Bridges
-  Major Roads
-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Hydrology

**Environmental Composite**

-  Class 1
-  Class 2
-  Class 3

The City of Washington planning area includes all areas within the corporate limits of the city and its ETJ.

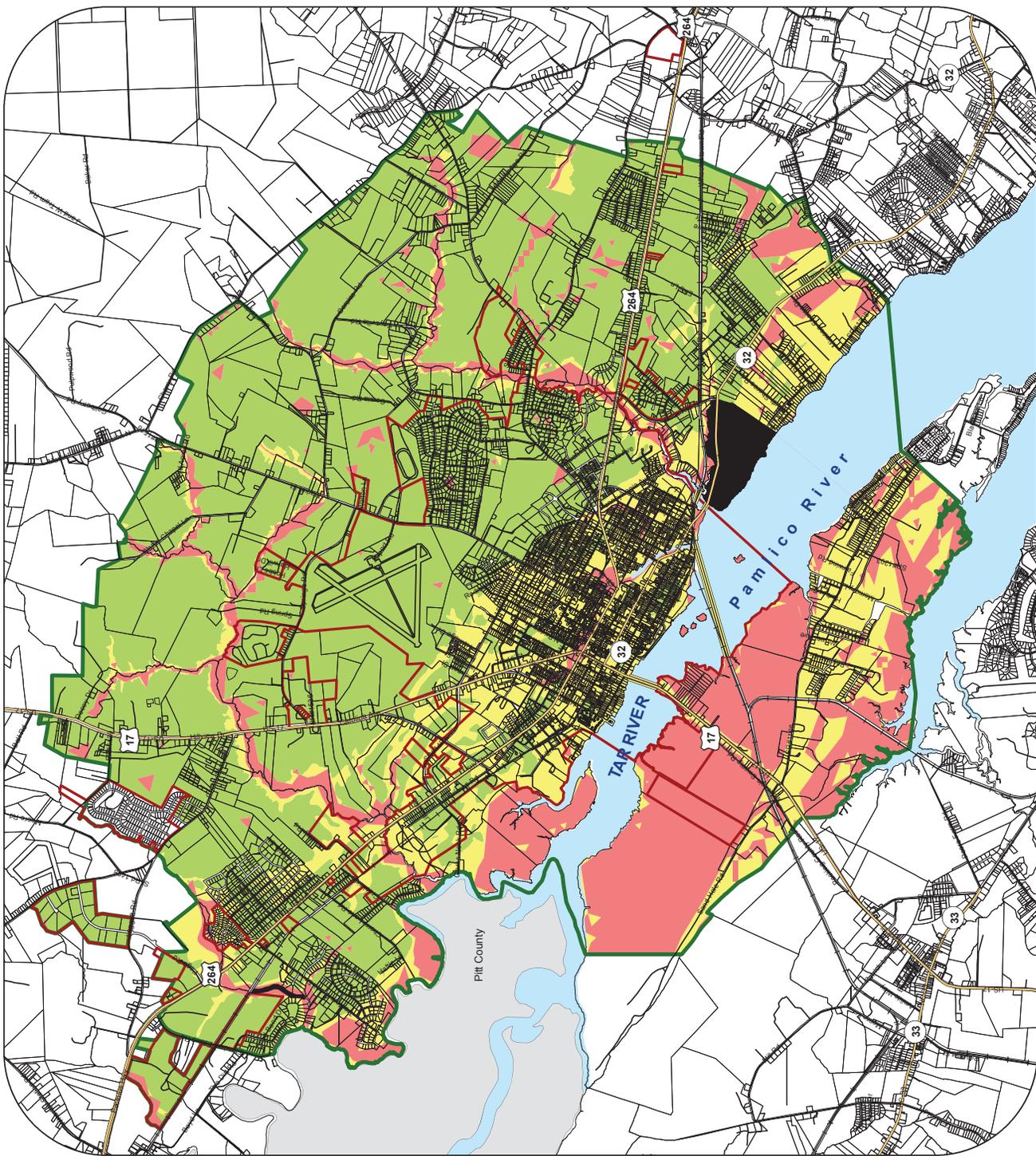
The preparation of this map was financed in part through a grant provided by the North Carolina Coastal Management Program, through funds provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, which is administered by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



1 inch equals 3,900 feet



**HCP**  
Holland Consulting Planners, Inc.



Map 3A

# City of Washington Land Use Plan

## Flood Hazard Areas

**Legend**

 City Limits	 Railroads
 ETJ	 Hydrology
 Pitt County	 Flood Hazard Area
 Washington Park Planning Area	 AE
 Airport	 AEFW
 Bridges	 SHADED X
 NC DOT Roads	
 Major Roads	

The City of Washington planning area includes all areas within the corporate limits of the city and its ETJ.

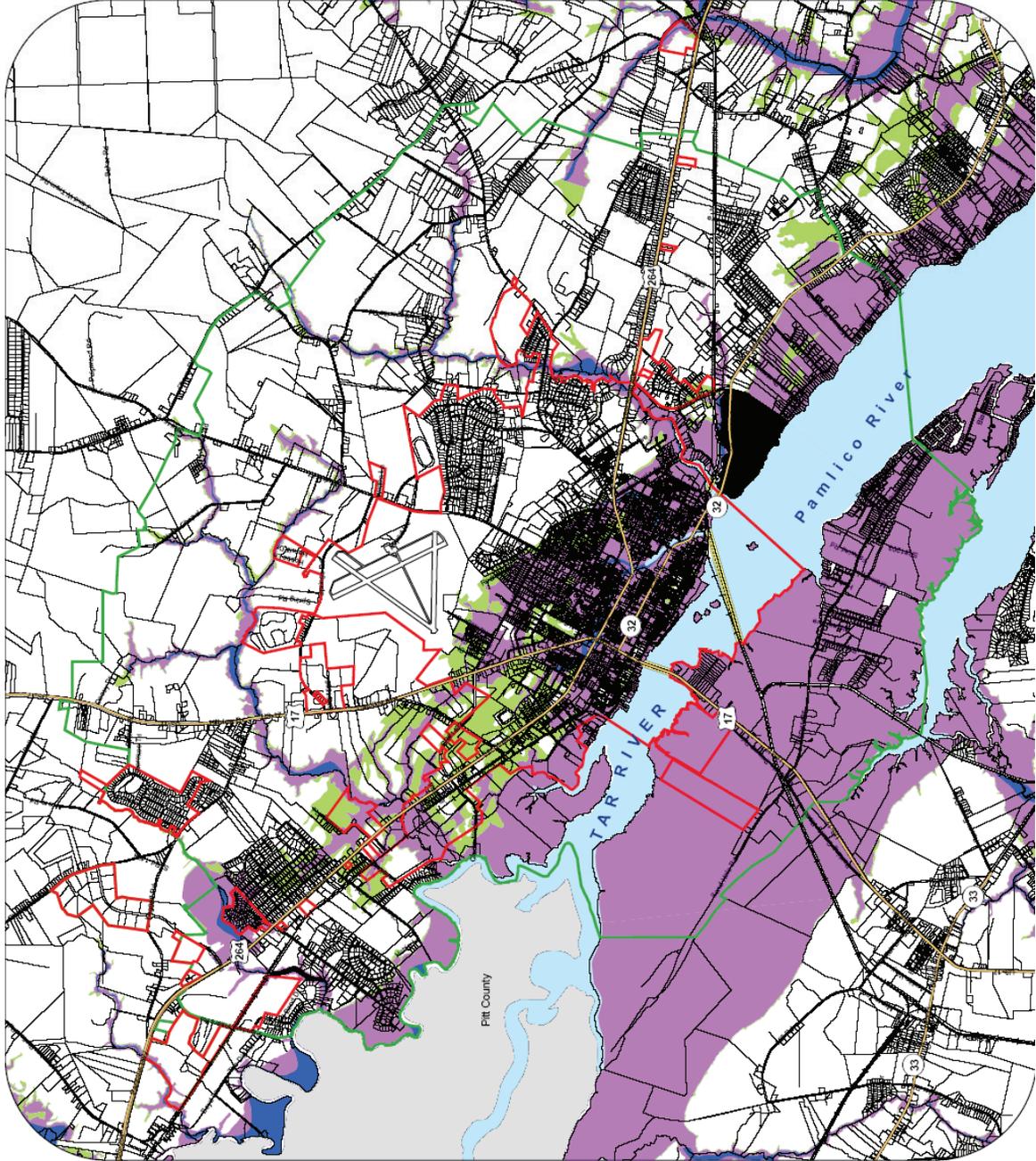
The preparation of this map was financed in part through a grant provided by the North Carolina Coastal Management Program, through funds provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, which is administered by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



1 inch equals 3,841 feet



**HCP**  
olland Consulting Planners, Inc.



# Map 4: Washington Comprehensive Plan

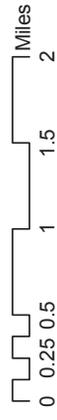
## Existing Land Use Planning Area

### Legend

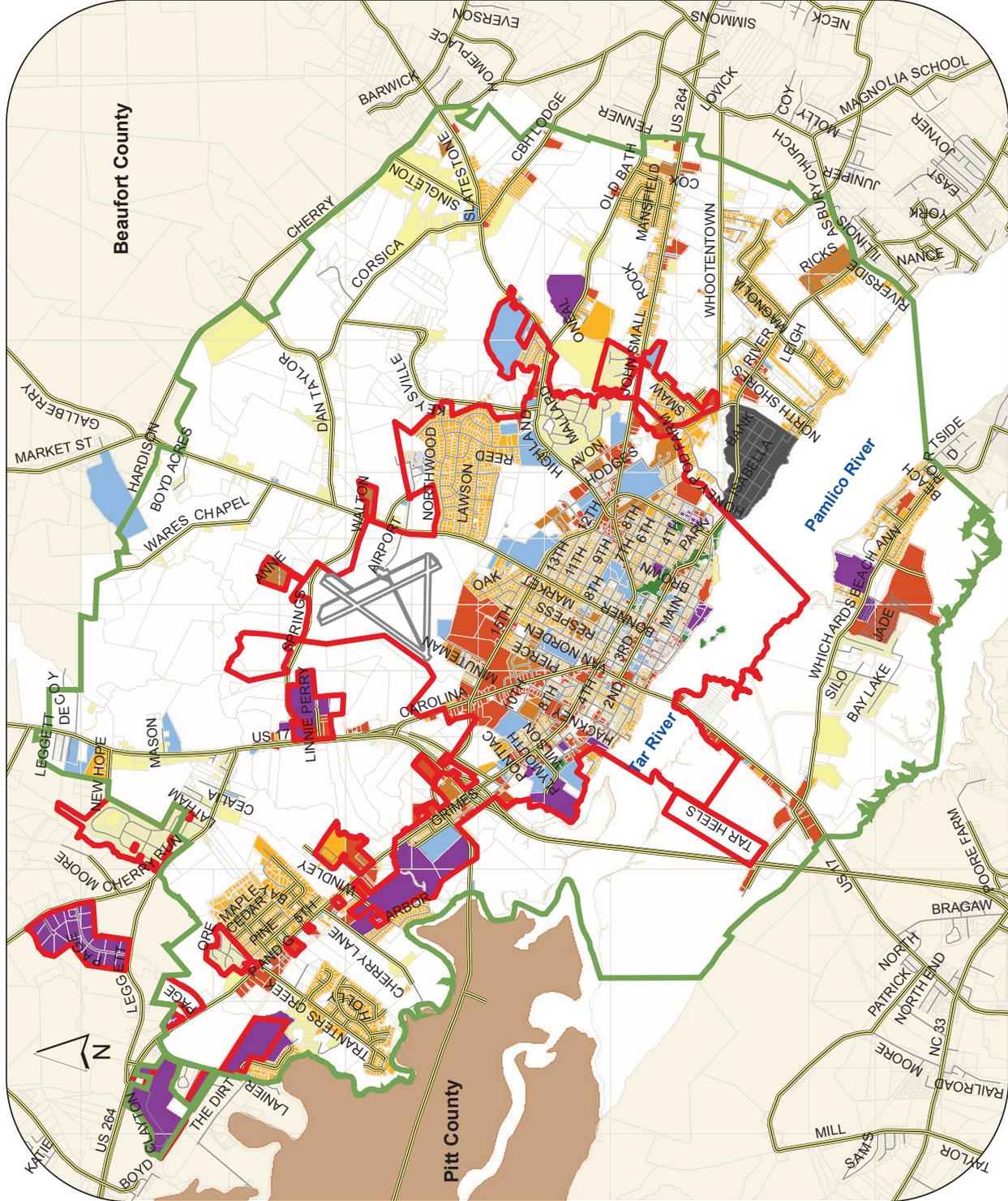
-  Airport
-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  City of Washington Corporate Limits
-  DOT Major Roads
-  Roads
-  Parcels
-  Beaufort County
-  Pitt County
-  Town of Washington Park Planning Area

### Existing Land Use

-  Parks-OpenSpace
-  Undeveloped
-  Low Density
-  Medium Density
-  High Density
-  Commercial / Office
-  Industrial
-  Public-Institutional



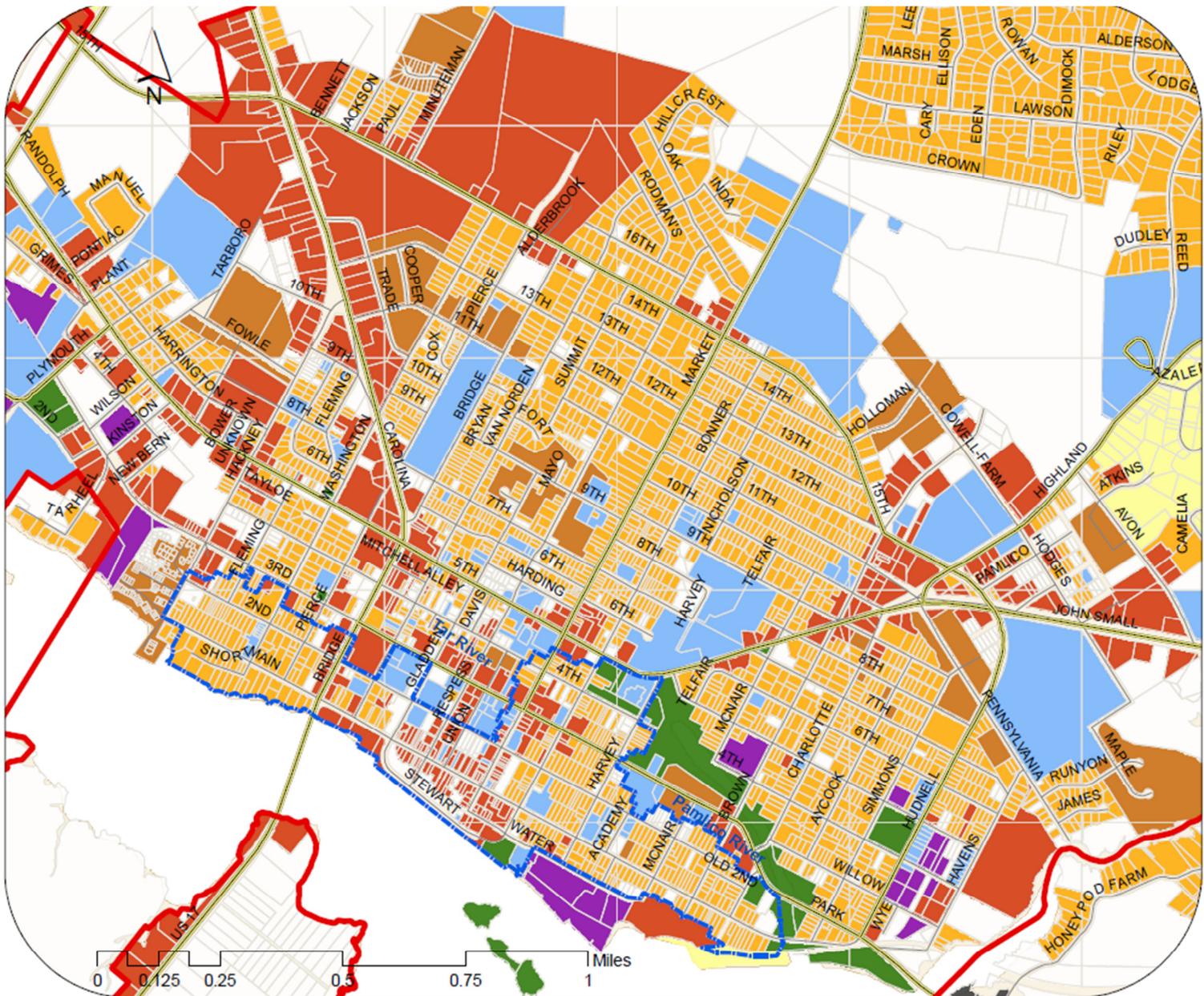
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May 2012



# Map 4A

## City of Washington Comprehensive Plan

### Existing Land Use Downtown



### Legend

- Airport
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- City of Washington Corporate Limits
- DOT Major Roads
- Roads
- Parcels
- Beaufort County
- Pitt County
- Town of Washinton Park Planning Area
- Historic District

### Existing Land Use

- Parks-OpenSpace
- Undeveloped
- Low Density
- Medium Density
- High Density
- Commercial / Office
- Industrial
- Public-Institutional

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March 2012

# Map 6: City of Washington Comprehensive Plan

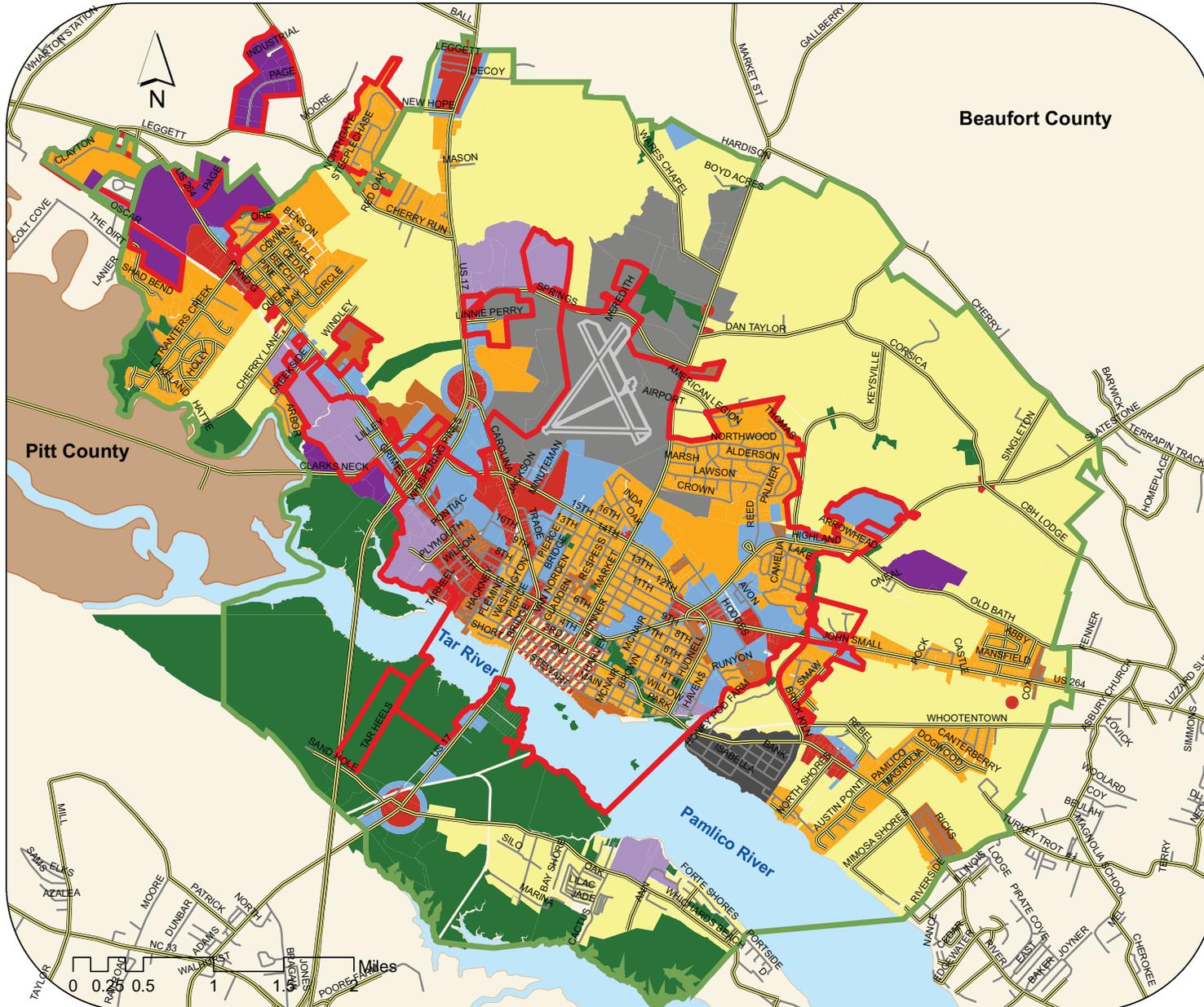
## Future Land Use City-wide

### Legend

- Airport
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- City of Washington Corporate Limits
- DOT Major Roads
- Roads
- Parcels
- Beaufort County
- Pitt County
- Town of Washington Park Planning Area

### Future Land Use

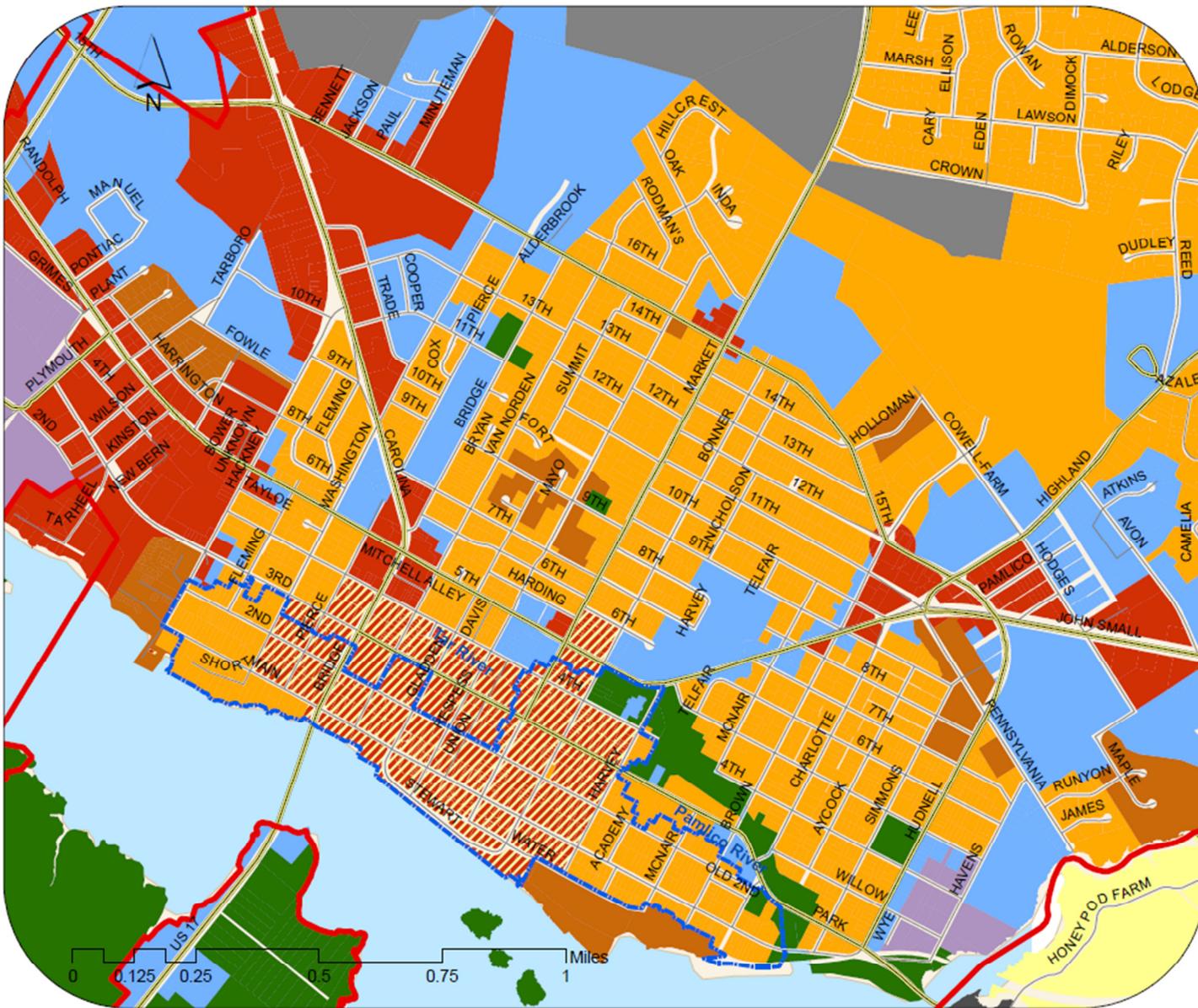
- Conservation
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Office & Institutional
- Airport
- Commercial Node
- Neighborhood Commercial Node



# Map 7

## City of Washington Comprehensive Plan

### Future Land Use Downtown



#### Legend

- Airport
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- City of Washington Corporate Limits
- DOT Major Roads
- Roads
- Parcels
- Beaufort County
- Pitt County
- Town of Washinton Park Planning Area
- Historic District

#### Future Land Use

- Conservation
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Office & Institutional
- Airport
- Commercial Node
- Neighborhood Commercial Node