CREATE WILMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Foundations Report

1 Growth Factors Report

2 Foundations Report

3 Policies

4 Growth Strategies Maps

5 Growth Strategies Report

ADOPTED 3/1/2016

CITY OF WILMINGTON NORTH CAROLINA

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City Shape and Motto

"Persevere" is Wilmington's motto, established and written onto the official seal in 1866. The blue shape found on the back cover of this document reflects the general boundary of the city; it is used frequently throughout Comprehensive Plan Box Set.

How to Use the Comprehensive Plan Box Set

Five Components of the Box Set

1

Growth Factors Report

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

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.

2

Foundations Report

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

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3

Policies

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

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4

Growth Strategies Maps

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

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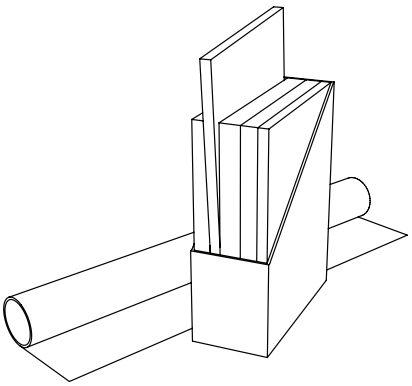
5

Growth Strategies Report

A forward looking document that describes the aspirational growth patterns of the city through specific growth strategies. This document works in concert with the Growth Strategies Maps and Policies.

Electronic readers click here to view or download this document.



The Box Set includes 5 documents and a set of 5 map posters.

Find Your Way Around

Cross-references are provided throughout the entire box set. Cross-references identify related information within another box set component, within the same box set component, or valuable information outside of the box set. Identified cross-references are not exhaustive as other relationships may also exist.

Three Types of Cross-References

Box Set Cross-Reference
This symbol is used to point you to a different box set component, as described above.

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

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

How it Works

The color of the symbol indicates the type of reference.

The name of the reference is provided here.

Cross-Reference Type

Reference

This is the location within the document or box set or the name of the external resource.

Wilmington Comprehensive Plan Themes

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

Creating a Place for Everyone

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

Topics Covered:

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

Getting Around

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

Topics Covered:

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

Regional Collaboration

Wilmington does not and cannot exist in a bubble. Collaboration with other local governments, including New Hanover County and surrounding towns and counties, is critical to Wilmington's and the region's success. Cooperative relationships with the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Cape Fear Community College, as well as the public school system, state ports, and utility providers will help us all flourish.

Topics Covered:

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

Changing Places, Revitalized Spaces

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

Topics Covered:

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

Unique Places, Captivating Spaces

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

Topics Covered:

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

Nurturing our Community

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

Topics Covered:

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

Opportunity and Prosperity

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

Topics Covered:

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

CREATE WILMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Foundations Report

This report is produced as a part of the overall comprehensive plan development process and is meant to highlight factors that formed the foundation of the policies and maps spelled out in the plan. A major component of this process is the input of the Wilmington community, but several other factors also helped shape the plan's policy components, including best practices, growth factors and trends, and projected demographic changes. This chapter serves as a guide to the community input received from residents, students, professionals, and organizations throughout the listening phase of the comprehensive plan. In addition to providing a map through the public input process, this document is also intended to help enhance and continue the discussion of planning issues in Wilmington by sharing the viewpoints collected.

This report is composed of three parts: a summary of the community input collected, a detailed analysis of the 12 Neighborhood Planning Areas, and an outline of the city's legacy planning documents.

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List of Contributors

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A complete list of contributors to this project, including the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and City Staff is available at the end of this document.

About This Report

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

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

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

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

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

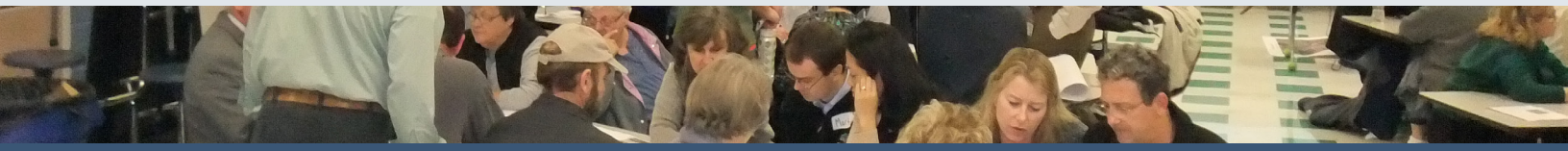
Create Wilmington is a multi-year process that includes the development of the comprehensive plan followed by the re-envisioning of the city's land development code. This report, therefore, is not the end of the public input process. Rather, it is a report on the input collected that has helped shape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

Planning Process

This document may be considered a "background report". Along with analysis and information provided in the Growth Factors Report, the public input presented in this document was used to develop polices and growth strategies.

Box Set Cross-Reference

Growth Factors Report



1 What We Heard

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Kickoff Meeting
The first meeting for the Create Wilmington planning process was held on May 14, 2013 at City Hall (image opposite).
Source: City of Wilmington

"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."

— Warren Buffett

Introduction

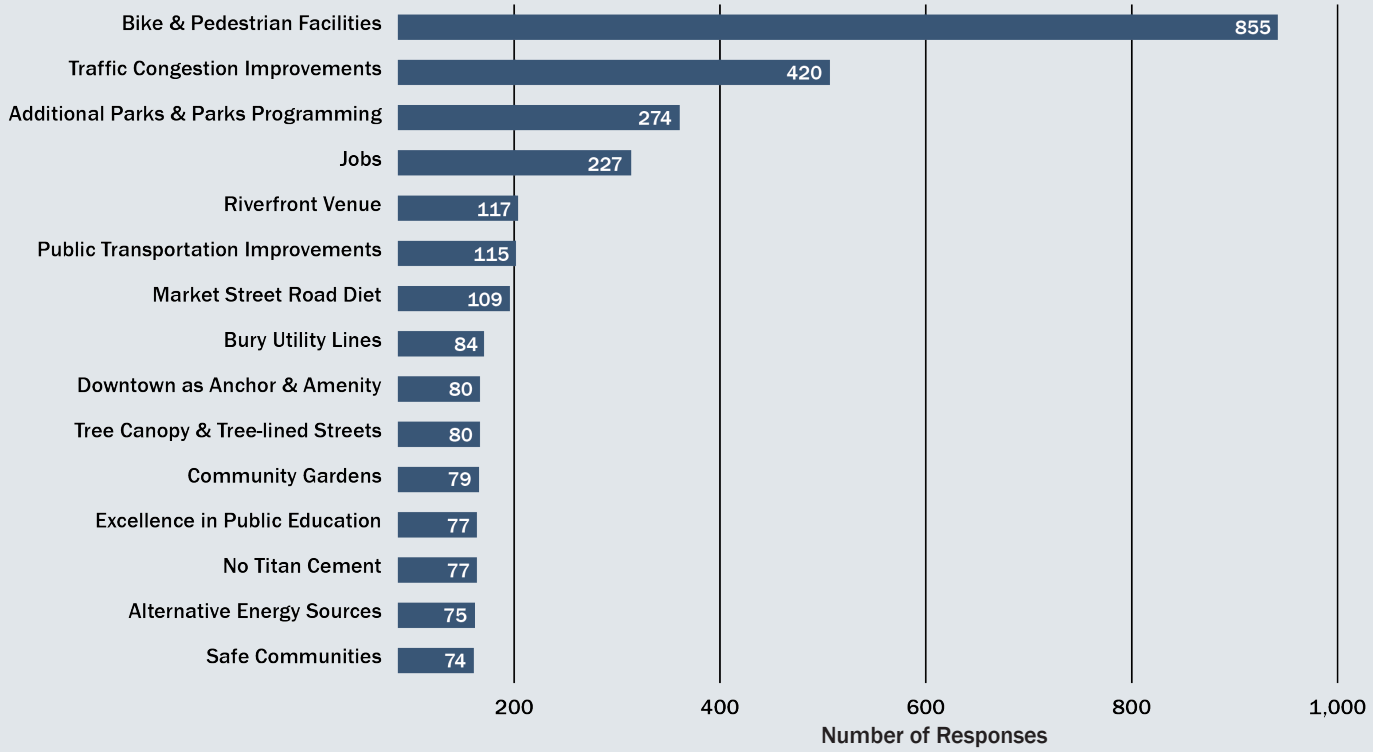
The Create Wilmington process began in earnest with a city-wide meeting at City Hall on May 14, 2013. This meeting kicked off a year-long public input process. Throughout the public input process, various input tools were utilized to determine what citizens like best about Wilmington and what their desired future for Wilmington might be.

To broaden the discussion, the public input process included several types of meetings and other public input methods. A series of meetings was held with Wilmington's business leaders as well as a series with Wilmington's neighborhoods. A number of "man on the street" surveys were conducted across the city, a "meeting in a box" tool was developed for existing groups and organizations, "Planning on Tap" meetings were held in local gathering places, and online surveys were available throughout the process. Input was also collected from school children at representative public school sites, on-campus meetings at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Cape Fear Community College, as well as an on-site meeting in the Hillcrest community. The Create Wilmington team also expanded public input through Connect Wilmington, an online forum. In addition to the public input collection process, there were several other outreach and engagement opportunities, including social media, a "lunch and learn" series, and an educational poster series.

Other channels for communication were established through social media, including the sharing of case studies, articles, and research. In addition to traditional media outlets, the team also used social media, an email listserv, signs in neighborhoods, and the city's newsletter to encourage engagement.

The Create Wilmington team compiled thousands of individual comments from more than 1,000 citizens. In this report, you will find details about the listening process. All of the comments received were sorted and analyzed using a keyword approach. This method helped to reveal patterns, which then led to major issues and themes. The key themes follow this introduction. The key themes in turn, helped create the six "Alternative Future Visions" that were presented for feedback and which will help shape the Growth Strategies Maps.

Comprehensive Plan Top 15 Priorities



Public Input

1.1 What We Heard by Planning Themes

The numerous comments received throughout the Comprehensive Plan public engagement process have been cataloged and categorized by the planning themes presented on pages 4 and 5. Here are the most common comments organized by planning theme.

Creating a Place for Everyone

- Additional parks and parks programming
- Additional public water access
- Keep green spaces and add additional
- Make/keep downtown a destination for locals and tourists
- Additional family activities downtown
- Riverwalk is a great asset
- Reduced crime, increased safety
- Increase transportation options for all people, regardless of age or ability

Getting Around

- More sidewalks and bike lanes
- Safe and equitable mobility for all ages and abilities
- Decreased traffic congestion
- Specific intersection improvements
- Roundabouts at major intersections
- Improvements to public transit
- Restore streetcar line from downtown to Wrightsville Beach
- Passenger rail service
- Better connections between land use and transportation
- Market Street road diet

Regional Collaboration

- Improvements to public schools
- Regional transportation improvements – rail, air, and highway
- Shared vision for the future

Policies

What the Citizens Said

Each chapter in the Policies document presents the most common public input related to that topic.

Changing Places, Revitalized Spaces

- Redevelop northern downtown
- Denser development patterns to improve transit options
- Make downtown safer
- Invest in place to spur economic development
- Protect neighborhoods
- Redevelopment of underutilized buildings, especially along major road corridors

Unique Places, Captivating Space

- Bury utility lines
- Increase density in certain locations
- Protect neighborhood character
- Enhance gateways
- Protect historic charm and character
- Manage nightlife
- A large event venue

Nurturing Our Community

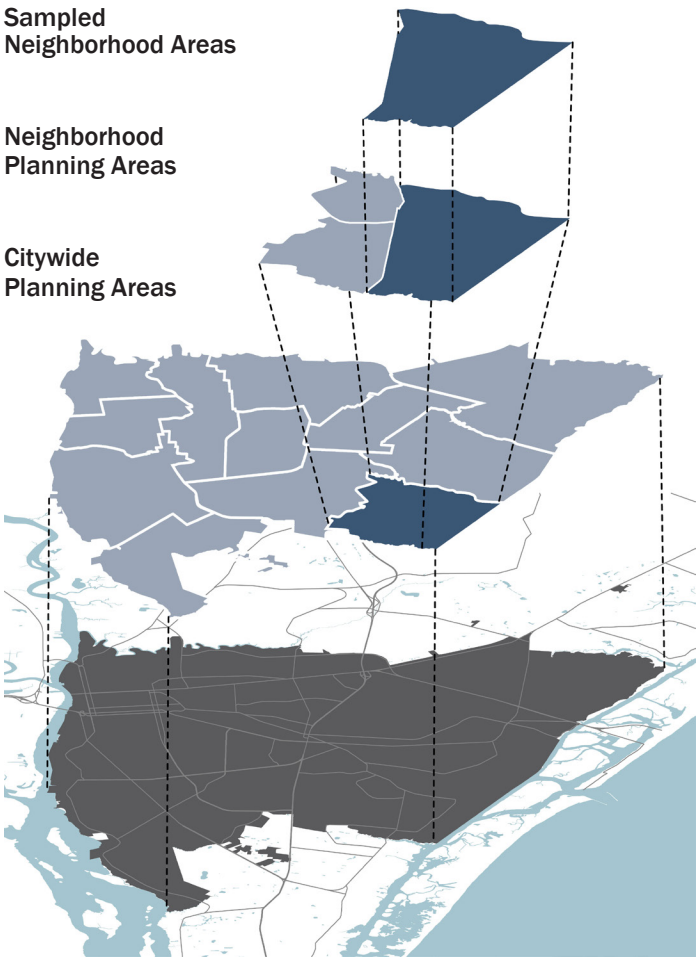
- Clean air and water
- Clean up creeks and waterways
- Clean jobs/clean tech preferred
- Maximize use of alternative energy sources
- Reduce flooding
- Protect and enhance tree canopy

Opportunity and Prosperity

- Bring additional jobs to Wilmington
- Attract higher-paying jobs
- Clean jobs/industries are preferred
- Retain young people, more jobs for recent college graduates
- No Titan Cement
- Technical jobs are desirable

1.2 Neighborhood Area Engagement

From October 2013 through April 2014, a dozen Neighborhood Planning Area meetings were held across the city. Over 600 citizens participated in these meetings, which provided an opportunity to learn about the comprehensive plan process and to provide input on likes and dislikes about neighborhoods and the city in general. At each meeting, citizens were first presented with information about the history, growth, and development of their neighborhood. Each group was then asked to consider what they liked best about the area (Keep it!), what they considered to be the area's biggest issues (Change it!), and what their big ideas for the area were (Dream it!). Groups were presented with maps for each of the primary topics, Keep it!, Change it!, and Dream it! Participants worked with the maps and discussed the questions in small groups.



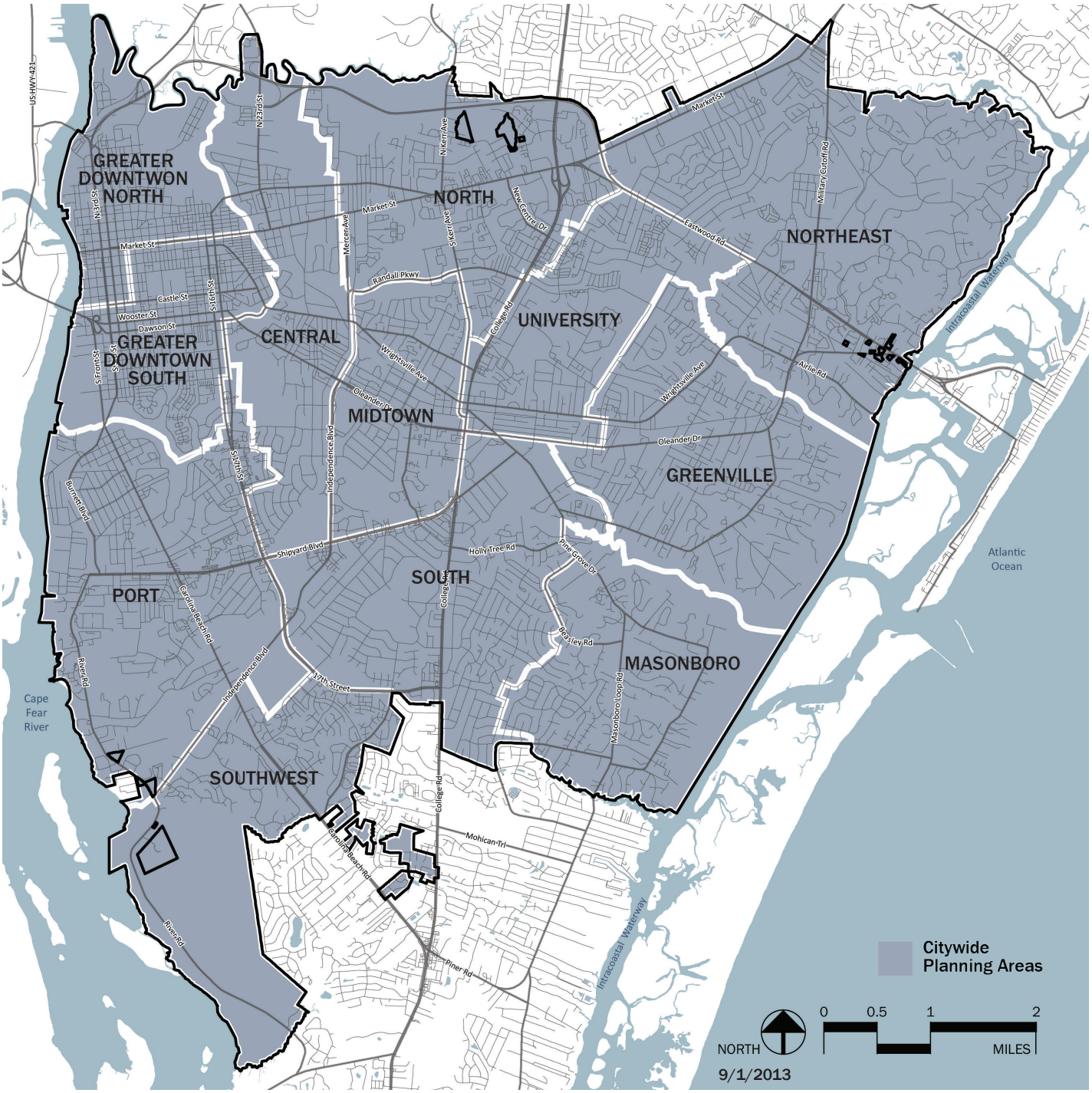
Issues and ideas were discussed at varying geographic scales during neighborhood area engagement meetings

Top 20 Priorities from the Neighborhood Planning Area Meetings

1. More crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths are desired
2. More natural areas, trails, trees, and open spaces are desired
3. Residential character and family atmosphere should be protected
4. More parks and recreation opportunities are needed
5. Greater traffic calming within neighborhoods
6. Reduce crime, code violations, and littering
7. Increase safety with lighting, signage, and additional police patrols
8. Improve traffic flow on major corridors
9. Greater access to groceries
10. Neighborhood schools are valued
11. Streetscape improvements are needed
12. Roadway and intersection improvements are desired
13. More neighborhood retail businesses and mixed use
14. Improved stormwater drainage
15. More public access to water
16. Keep pace with infrastructure improvements and place utilities underground
17. Enhance cultural resources and diversity
18. Entertainment venue is needed
19. Greater access to healthcare and services
20. More community events and activities

Additional Information
Neighborhood Planning Area Data Sheets

Planning Areas



To facilitate public input, the city was divided into 12 planning areas, based on similar geographies and development patterns and using major roadways and natural features as boundaries. Within each planning area there are collections of smaller neighborhood areas. Neighborhood areas can be a collection of subdivisions or developments and many include both residential and commercial uses.

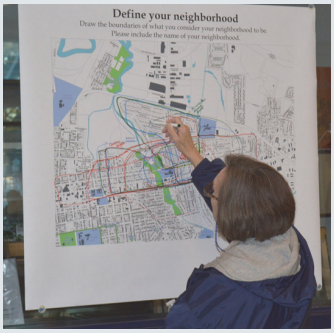
At each meeting, citizens were presented with information about the history, growth, and development of their neighborhood and then asked to participate in small group discussions.

Growth Factors Report
2

Source (All Images): City of Wilmington

Mapping Neighborhood Boundaries

Participants were asked to draw the boundaries of what they consider to be their neighborhood. The results of this exercise will help determine how to structure future small-area planning efforts.



Top Five Responses

The following is a summary of the most frequently identified responses for each of the primary topics discussed. There was an overwhelming call for more pedestrian and bicycle facilities, parks and recreation, and good neighborhood design.

KEEP IT

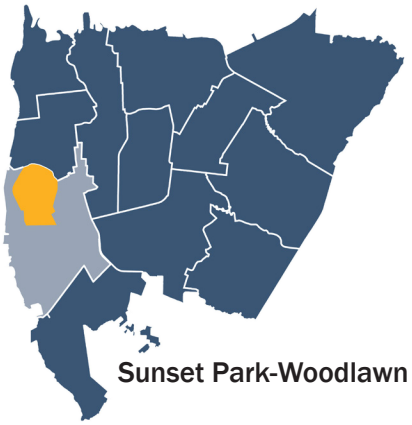
1. Parks, natural areas, trails, trees, and open spaces
2. Neighborhood character and family atmosphere
3. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
4. Recreation opportunities
5. Neighborhood schools. Access to groceries, shopping, dining, and entertainment

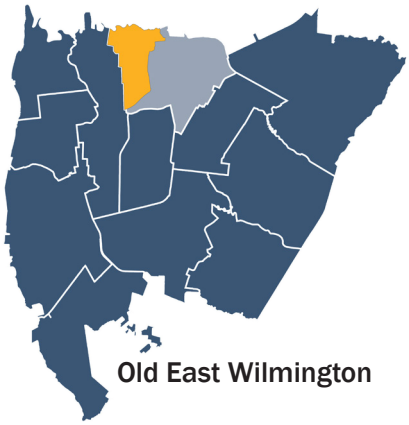
CHANGE IT

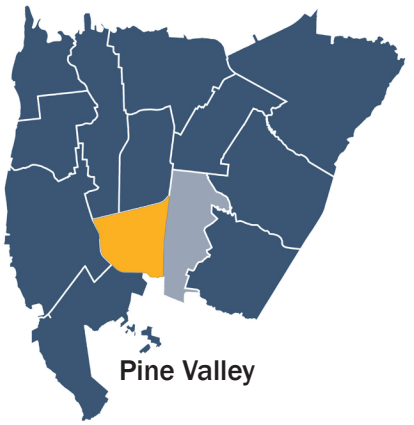
1. More crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths
2. More traffic calming within neighborhoods
3. Increase safety via improved lighting, signage, and additional police patrols
4. Reduce crime, code violations, and littering
5. Improve stormwater drainage

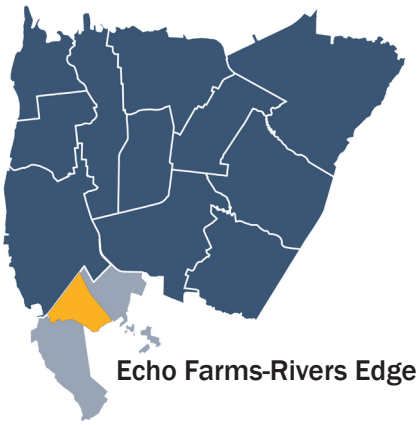
DREAM IT

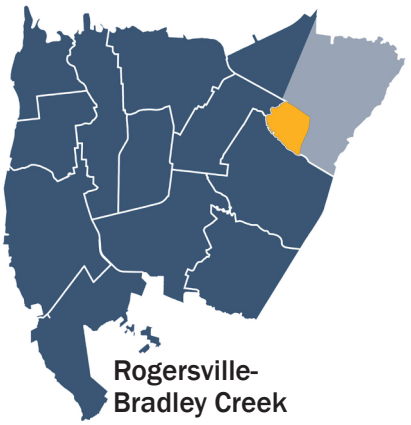
1. More sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian bridges, bike lanes, and trails
2. More parks and recreation opportunities
3. More traffic calming within neighborhoods
4. Increased public access to water
5. Streetscape improvements





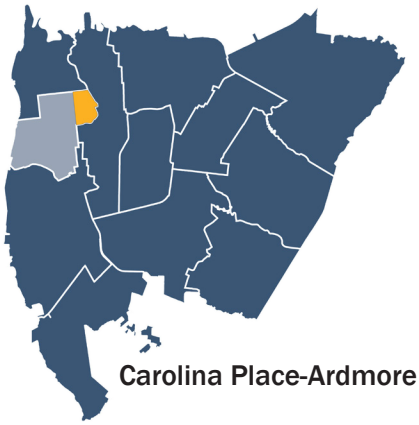


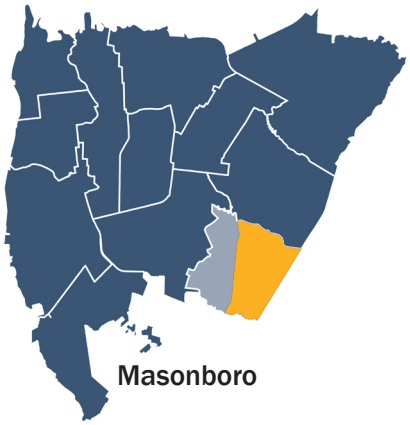


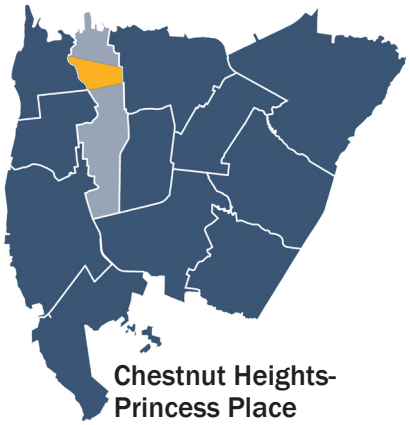


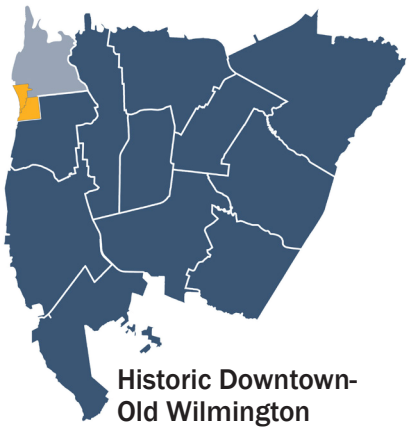
Sample Areas
Meetings were held in neighborhoods, one from each of the 12 city-wide planning areas.

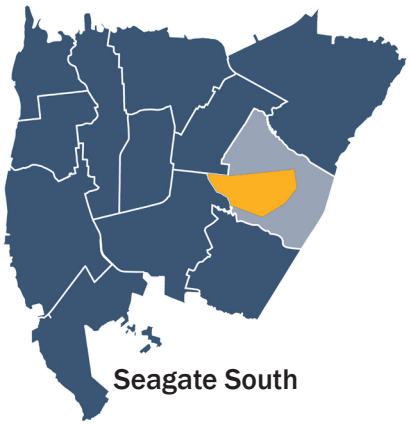
Sample Area
Citywide Planning Area











Sample Area

Citywide Planning Area

1.3 Business and Community Leaders Roundtables

During January, February, and March 2014, the Create Wilmington team met with business and community leaders to gather their feedback on their vision for the future of Wilmington. These community leaders are currently making decisions that are shaping Wilmington today. They were polled as to their ideas about factors that influence the growth and development of the city, and what needs our business community will be facing in the future. Participants were asked to discuss several questions centered around the Growth Factors Report, which helped to initiate the conversation.

Roundtable Discussion Questions

- As a business and community leader, what is your vision for the future of Wilmington?
- What key elements keep your business here?
- What barriers do you see to expanding your business here or for a new business opening here?
- What are some things the city should do to help spur economic growth?
- What are the major barriers to economic growth in Wilmington?
- What policies directly impact innovation, business development, and results for your business?
- As an employer, what elements do you look for in a place in terms of attracting and retaining employees?

The themes that emerged from these discussions include regional collaboration, opportunities that come with growth, shared vision for the future, clarity and certainty in development regulations, and quality of life and cost of living. These leaders identified several strengths of Wilmington, including location and climate, quality of life, great potential for growth and opportunity, and a willing and able workforce. Opportunities they identified included having a clean slate in terms of marketing Wilmington, sufficient water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate growth, redevelopment opportunities, and a strong opportunity to grow businesses and the Wilmington "brand."

Our business and community leaders also identified several weaknesses on which Wilmington can improve, including limited job opportunities, lack of integrated neighborhoods (housing types, price-points, and diversity of population), concentration of public housing, disparities in the K-12 schools, high costs of living, and a lack of coordination around economic and community development. Threats, challenges, and other factors the city needs to consider included the need to develop an agreed-upon regional vision with a common path forward, the issue of overcoming trade-area demographics that are skewed by the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean, and the need to revise land development regulations, especially now that most opportunities involve redevelopment rather than development of large tracts of vacant land.

Key Planning Theme

Economic Opportunity

Fostering opportunities for economic growth and development that enhance the concepts of each of the other themes is critical to future prosperity.

Key Planning Theme

Regional Collaboration

Collaboration with other local governments, including New Hanover County and surrounding towns and counties, is critical to Wilmington's and the region's success.

1.4 Planning on Tap

The week of March 17th, 2014, the Create Wilmington team set out to meet people in the places where they were already gathering, including bars, restaurants, and cafes across the city. Each meeting was hosted by a pair of Steering Committee members, and focused on one of the seven plan themes. Informal discussion about the selected theme was facilitated, with notes recorded by the hosts. Results from the Planning on Tap discussions were sorted and ranked by keyword; several ideas rose to the top as shown at the right.

Planning on Tap Ideas

1. Bike and pedestrian improvements – more bike lanes and sidewalks, improve existing sidewalks and Cross-city Trail
2. Reinvestment in and redevelopment of neighborhoods and commercial centers
3. Improvements to development regulations/ codes needed

1.5 Student and Youth Outreach

Middle School Students

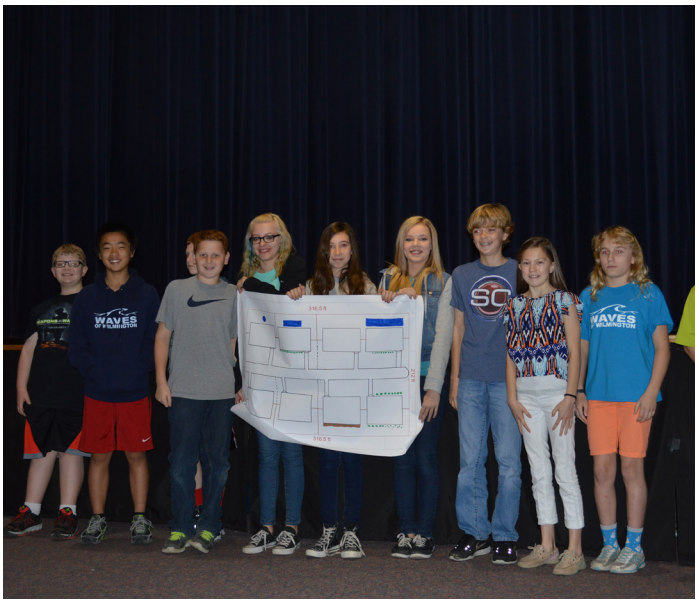
This is a legacy plan and its outcomes will most likely be experienced by the future citizens of Wilmington. The Create Wilmington team visited students in their classrooms to collect their feedback on what makes a good city, as these are the citizens that will be most impacted the plans created today, for better or worse. Initially, two classrooms of 6th graders at Roland Grise Middle School were approached for their input. Students were given a brief introduction to planning in general, and then asked about what they think makes a good city, what they like about Wilmington, and what would make Wilmington even better. Because these young citizens are most likely to hold the jobs of the future they were also asked what their ideal job would be and whether they thought they would live in Wilmington or somewhere else.

To make the purpose of the comprehensive plan more real, the Create Wilmington team also left the two classes with a few assignments. They were divided into groups and asked to complete one of three projects: design a park, develop an infill lot, or prioritize the locations of new crosswalks.

Priorities of 6th Grade Citizens

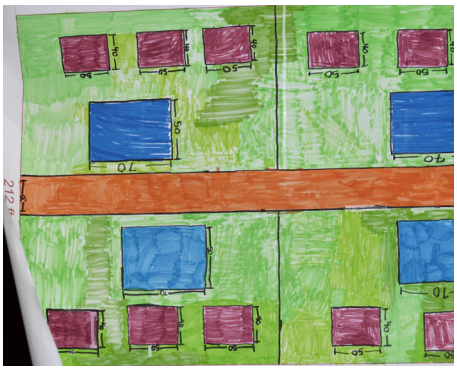
1. Lots of things to do, entertainment, and recreation opportunities make a city a good place to live
2. Lots of housing choices make a city a good place to live
3. More sidewalks and safer places to ride bikes would make Wilmington even better
4. The many festivals and events around town make Wilmington a good place to live
5. Future careers include: engineer, health care and research, professional athlete, and lawyer

Most of the students said that they did not think they would be living in Wilmington 25 years from now. Reasons given for not living in Wilmington in the future included wanting to live in a bigger city, looking for a different geography (mountains or cooler temperatures), a desire to see the world, and a wish to live in a place with professional sports teams. Only two students said they thought they would be living in Wilmington 25 years from now. Reasons for wanting to remain in Wilmington included staying near the beach and staying near family. Among those students who said they thought they might return to Wilmington in the future, the top reasons given included coming back to Wilmington for retirement or having a beach vacation home here.



Design A Park

Students were given a vacant site, a budget, and a list of park amenities and were asked to design a park. They were asked to stay within budget, explain how people would access the park, and determine what amenities would be included and why. Students designed a park that offered the greatest variety of activities for local residents.



Develop an Infill Lot

Students were asked to create a residential site plan for infill development on a vacant lot. To assist the students, some constraints of the city's Land Development Code such as minimum lot area and dimensions, setbacks, driveways, and sidewalks were explained. Students created a residential site plan that included housing types for different income levels.

Prioritize Crosswalk Locations

Students were asked to prioritize locations in the vicinity of their school where signalized crosswalks are lacking. Students were given a map of the city, a budget, construction costs, and time constraints. They were then asked to identify locations, stay within the budget, and complete the project on time. Students identified locations for new signalized crosswalks that offered the greatest access to their school and local parks.

Key Planning Theme

Creating a Place for Everyone

Wilmington wants a welcoming community that includes arts and culture, activities for youth, families, and seniors, and high-quality housing that is available to everyone.

High School Students

The Create Wilmington team talked with students at Hoggard High School as representatives of the teenage demographic. Students were asked what they like about Wilmington, what would make Wilmington better, and what they saw in their futures in terms of where they would be living and what kinds of jobs they would have. Things they would like to see in Wilmington include more entertainment, amusement, and dining options; more sidewalks and safer biking options; better schools; and a better music scene. Things that they like best about Wilmington are being close to the beach, downtown, and recreation opportunities. Many of the students, both at the middle school and high school, viewed Wilmington as a good place to grow up and raise a family; however, most of the students indicated that they did not think they would be living in Wilmington 25 years from now. Many students believe they would not be able to find their ideal job in Wilmington, but many also wanted to live a bigger city and/or explore the world, or they wanted to live somewhere with a different climate or geography. Their future careers include doctors, scientists and researchers, engineers, and policy making.

College Students

Although meetings were held on campus at both Cape Fear Community College and University of North Carolina – Wilmington, attendance was light at both locations. To reach more students, an online survey was created. This survey focused on why students chose to come to Wilmington, whether they thought they would stay in Wilmington upon finishing school, and what sorts of jobs and careers they are looking for. Results of the on-line survey are shown to the right.

Additional Information

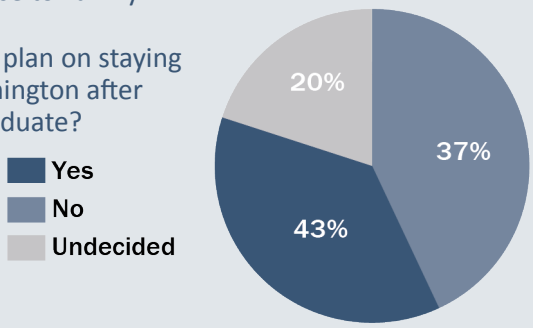
UNCW Campus Master Plan Update 2010

College Survey Results

Why did you choose the neighborhood you live in? (Top 5)

1. Affordable
2. Location - Close to Work/School/Beach
3. Safe/Low Crime
4. School District
5. Close to Family

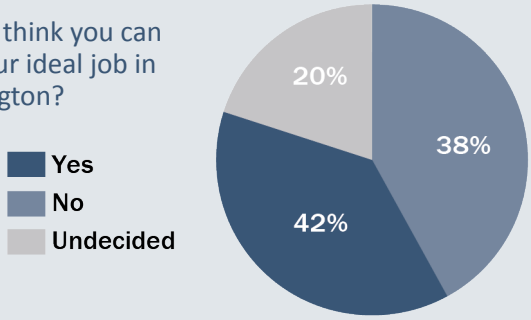
Do you plan on staying in Wilmington after you graduate?



What type of job are you looking for? (Top 5)

1. Medical/Dental Field
2. Teaching
3. Arts & Entertainment
4. Science/Research/Lab
5. Law Enforcement

Do you think you can find your ideal job in Wilmington?



Why did you move to Wilmington? (Top 5)

1. Native
2. School
3. Beach
4. Job
5. Family

Aging in Place

A survey on aging in place revealed that many citizens want to be able to age in their current home or at least in their current neighborhood. Obstacles cited to aging in place primarily included transportation and access limitations. Survey respondents indicated a preference for investments by the city in mobility and transportation, affordable housing, and alternative housing options to help enable citizens to age in place. More than 65% of survey takers rated Wilmington's current public transportation system as below average or poor and more than 53% indicated that mobility options from their current home are poor. More than 57% said they are retired or would like to retire in Wilmington, while 22% said they were unsure where they would retire. Reasons for being unsure about retiring in Wilmington include having many years until retirement, the cost of housing in Wilmington, and questions about mobility and ability to meet their needs upon retirement in Wilmington.

Additional Information

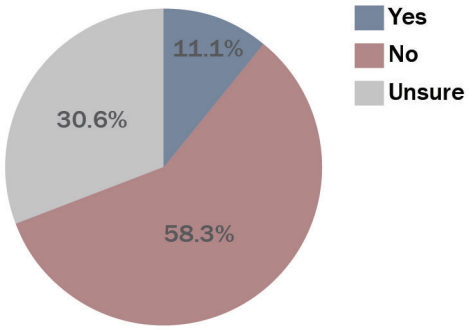
The Maturing of America

What is Aging in Place?

"Aging in place" refers to the ability of a person to live in their residence, for as long as they are able, as they age. To age in place, people need to consider how their home is setup (e.g., stairs, hand rails, wide doorways), how they will access their daily needs (e.g. distance from groceries and shopping), and healthcare (e.g. distance and mobility to doctors' offices, public transit access).

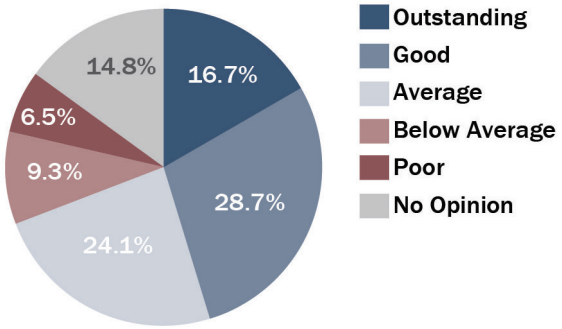
Aging in Wilmington

Do you believe that Wilmington is adequately preparing for an aging population?



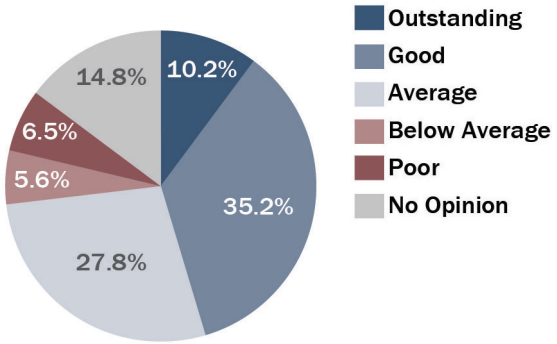
Quality of Healthcare

How do you rate quality of healthcare for seniors in Wilmington?



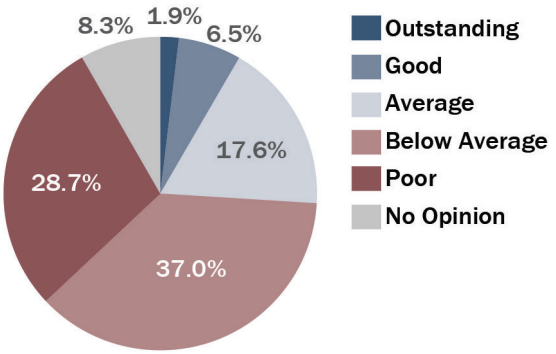
Access to Healthcare

How do you rate access to healthcare for seniors in Wilmington?



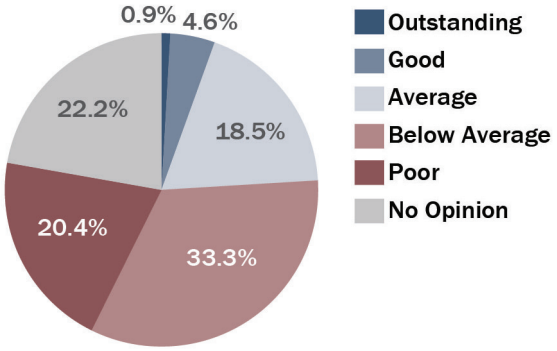
Public Transportation

How do you rate public transportation options within the city?



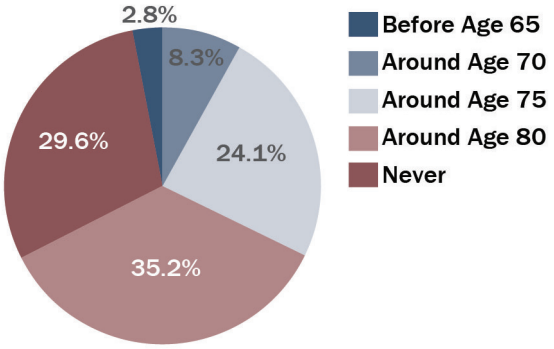
Employment

How do you rate job options for seniors in Wilmington?



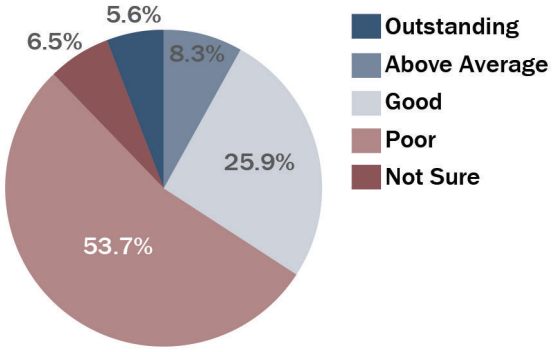
Driving

At what age do you believe you will quit driving your own car?



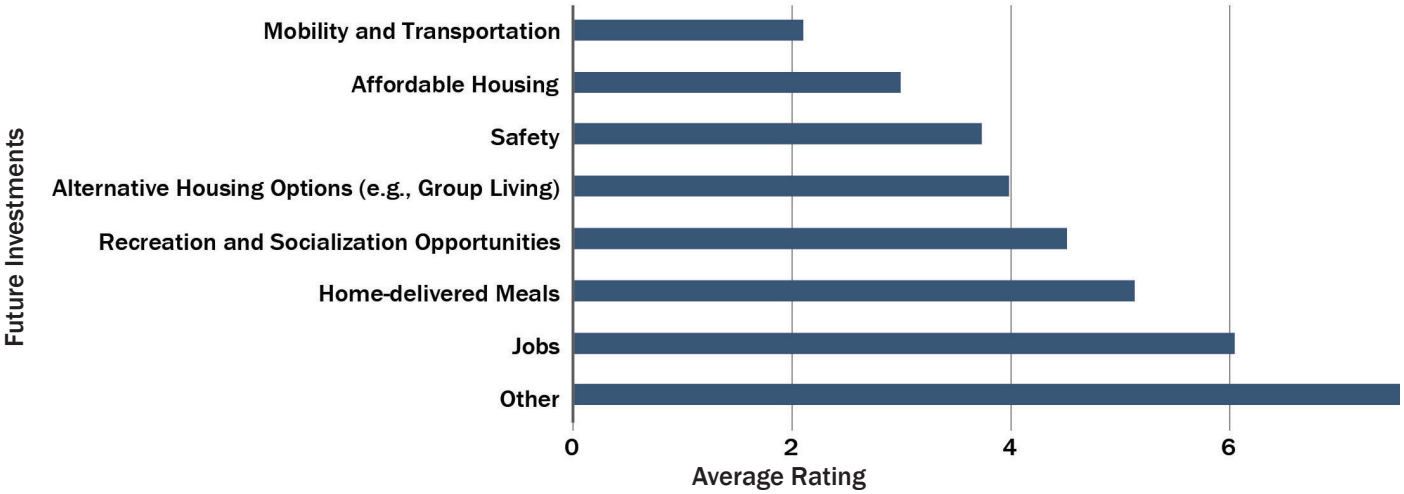
Mobility

How do you rate your current mobility options from your home?



Future Investments

Which areas are the most critical for investment by the city of Wilmington in relation to an aging population? ("1" being the most important, "2" being the second most important, and so on.)



Investing in Place

The American Planning Association conducted a survey in March 2014 regarding "investing in place" as a mechanism for economic development. The Create Wilmington team recreated the survey in the fall of 2014 to capture the opinions of Wilmingtonians regarding investing in place. This survey revealed that many Wilmingtonians believe that investing in schools, transportation choices, and walkable areas is a better way to grow the economy than traditional approach of recruiting companies. Most respondents would prefer to live in a walkable community, either urban or suburban, rather than in a neighborhood where they are dependent on a car to get around. A majority of respondents (60%) want to be able to stay in their homes as they age, and over half do not feel Wilmington is doing enough to allow residents to age in place. More than 60% of respondents said that having extra space in their home where someone could live with them is at least somewhat important in choosing where to live.

Place Trends

The preferences of Wilmington residents are similar to trends seen across the nation. Wilmington residents want to live in walkable communities, want more transportation options, and want to stay in their homes as they age.

Additional Information

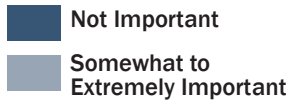
Investing in Place (Wilmington)

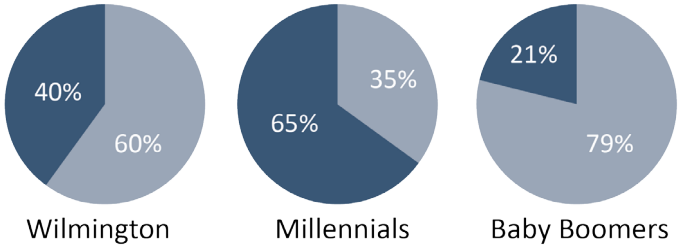
Additional Information

Investing in Place (American Planning Association)

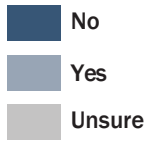
Getting Older

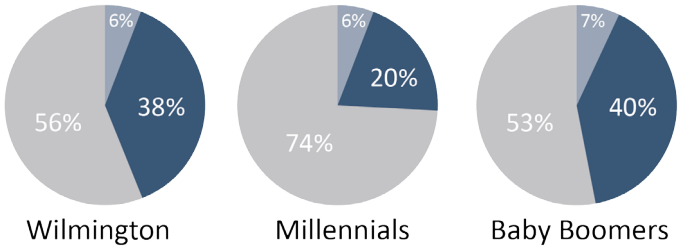
How important is it to you to stay in your current home as you get older?





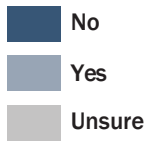
Do you believe Wilmington is doing enough to help people who want to stay in their own homes as they get older?

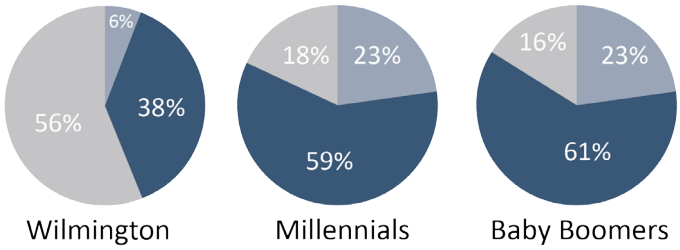




Transportation Options

Do you believe that there are enough non-car transportation options available in Wilmington?





60% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE LOST CONFIDENCE IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY WITH 70% OF MILLENNIALS AND 57% OF BOOMERS BELIEVING THE ECONOMY IS "FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED."

50% of Millennials and 59% of Boomers said the U.S. economy will stay the same or get worse over the next five years.

NEARLY **70%** of Millennials, Baby Boomers, and Gen Xers surveyed see too few current personal economic opportunities. During the next five years, however, 59% of Millennials are **optimistic about personal finances** and 30% of Baby Boomers **expect their local economy to improve**.

2/3 of all respondents and **67% OF MILLENNIALS** believe investing in schools, transportation choices, and walkable areas is a **BETTER WAY TO GROW THE ECONOMY** than traditional approaches of recruiting companies.

35% of Millennials and 30% overall are at least somewhat likely to move in the next five years.

82% OF MILLENNIALS | **81%** ACTIVE BOOMERS

WOULD PREFER TO LIVE SOMEDAY IN A WALKABLE COMMUNITY, WHETHER AN URBAN OR SUBURBAN LOCATION.

Only 18% of Millennials and 19% of Baby Boomers would prefer living, if they can afford it, in a suburb, an area that requires driving to most places.

Decline of the Traditional Suburb

Where do you live now and where do you want to live someday if you can afford it?

A suburb where most people drive to most places:

	Wilmington	Millennials	Boomers
Now	56%	44%	56%
Someday	23%	18%	19%
Change	- 33%	- 26%	- 37%

A suburb with walkable amenities:

	Wilmington	Millennials	Boomers
Now	27%	29%	27%
Someday	44%	38%	50%
Change	+17%	+9%	+23%

An urban area with walkable amenities and access to transit:

	Wilmington	Millennials	Boomers
Now	17%	27%	17%
Someday	33%	44%	31%
Change	+16%	+17%	+14%

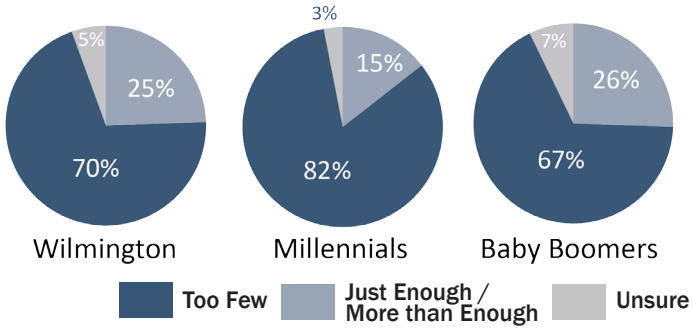
These results indicate that Millennials, Boomers, and city residents overall want to live in more walkable urban places in the future.

Growth Factors Report
8.0

Box Set Cross-Reference
Growth Strategies Maps

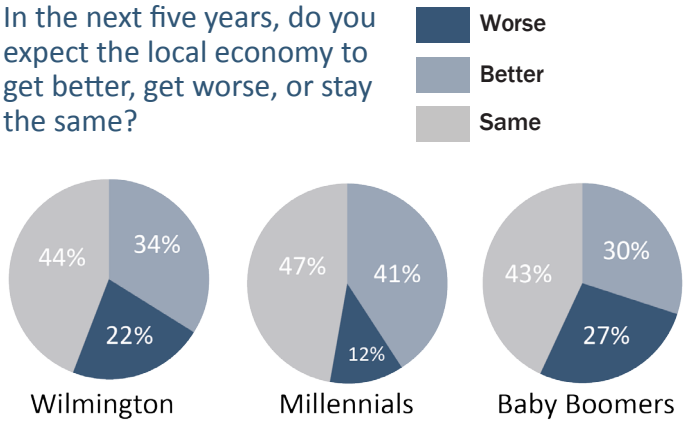
Economic Opportunity

When it comes to economic opportunities and financial security for you personally, would you say the local economy offers more than enough, just enough, or too few opportunities?



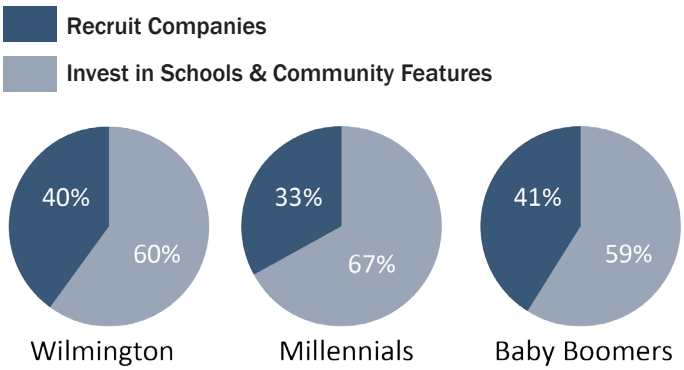
Local Economic Recovery

In the next five years, do you expect the local economy to get better, get worse, or stay the same?



Growing the Local Economy

Some feel the best way to grow the local economy is to recruit companies to the area. Others feel the best way is to invest in community features, such as local schools, transportation choices, walkable areas, and making the area as attractive as possible. Which is closer to your belief?



Approximately 62% of respondents cite living expenses as important in choosing where to live.

WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE ONE OVERRIDING FACTOR IN CHOOSING WHERE TO LIVE, RESPONDENTS OVERALL CITED

QUALITY OF LIFE FEATURES

ahead of local economic health and job prospects.

Majorities of both Millennials 59% and Baby Boomers 61% said there are not enough transportation alternatives where they live.

37 PERCENT of respondents say **diversity in people and generations** is an important component of a successful community.

High-priority Community Preferences: Metro Features (Local)

Which of the following community features are most important to you? (Rank in order of importance with 1 being the most important) (Rank order below indicates results of survey)

1. Major professional of college sports teams
2. Affordable and convenient transportation choices
3. High-speed Internet access
4. Vibrant centers of entertainment and culture
5. Sidewalks, bike lanes, hiking trails, and fitness choices
6. Access to clean energy, renewables, and energy conservation
7. Mix of housing choices
8. Great school system (K-12, colleges, and continuing education)
9. Safe streets

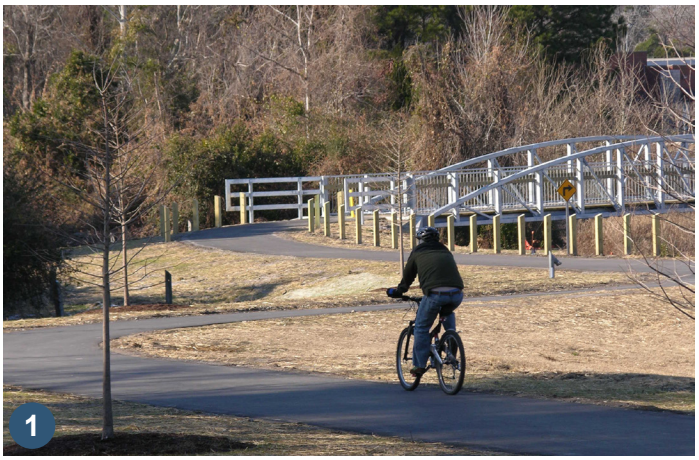
1.7 Man on the Street

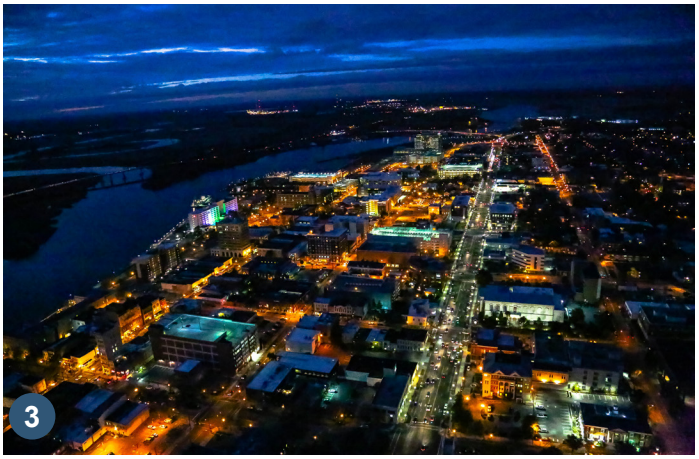
As part of the Create Wilmington team's effort to reach people who may not participate in traditional public meetings, several short surveys were created, and the team took to the streets to find people where they were already gathering to collect their input.

The first survey asked people what they liked best about Wilmington, what they liked least about Wilmington, and what would make Wilmington even better. The three most common responses to what people like best about Wilmington were the beach, downtown, and the weather. The three most common responses to what people like least about Wilmington were traffic, crime, and lack of public restrooms (downtown). The three most common responses to what would make Wilmington even better were biking and walking facilities, a professional sports team, and an amusement or theme park.

The second survey asked people to identify the best thing about their neighborhood and their big idea for their neighborhood. The most common things people like best about their neighborhoods are location, the feeling and character of their neighborhood, and neighborhood activities. Top "big ideas" include making neighborhoods safer for walking and biking, more recreation opportunities and slower speeds/less traffic through neighborhoods.

The final survey asked participants about their favorite things to do in Wilmington, what their family's favorite things to do together are, and what family activities/facilities could be added to make Wilmington even better. Favorite activities include outdoor recreation, including swimming, boating, fishing, and tennis, followed closely by enjoying the city's parks, the area beaches, and downtown. The top family activities in Wilmington identified were again, outdoor recreation, the beaches and parks, biking, and exploring downtown. The most common elements that would make Wilmington even better include more bicycle infrastructure, activities for kids and teens, additional parks and parks programming, and additional pools (including an indoor pool) and splash pads.





1. More recreation opportunities, especially infrastructure for walking and biking, were common big ideas.
2. The waterways that surround Wilmington provide for many of the activities enjoyed by families.
3. Families enjoy going downtown, which provides things to do both day and night.

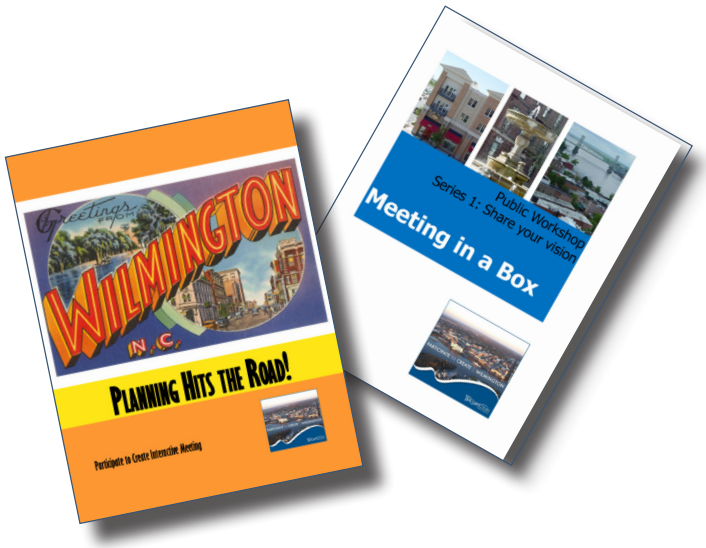
Source (All Images): City of Wilmington

1.8 Meeting in a Box

The Create Wilmington team recognized that not all people want to or are able to attend public meetings. To this end, a "meeting in a box" was created. This box contained all of the materials necessary for a citizen to hold an input meeting with an already-existing group. The outline for conducting a meeting could also be downloaded from www.createwilmington.com, and results could be mailed to or dropped off at the city planning office, or entered online via Survey Monkey. An estimated 25 citizens participated in the meeting in a box process.

Two editions of meeting in a box were available during the plan development process. Following the group discussion, participants were asked to identify the three items of greatest importance to the group. The second edition of meeting in a box included questions related to a desired vision for the future of Wilmington.

This tool revealed that people value downtown Wilmington, coastal resources, and outdoor recreation. Seen as challenges were the education system, insufficient regional collaboration, and aging infrastructure. Ideas for Wilmington's future included transportation improvements, including an additional river crossing, better options for seniors (walking, biking), reduced traffic congestion, more technology jobs, expansions to the port, and better collaboration between the city and the county.



Key Planning Theme

Creating a Place for Everyone

Wilmington wants a welcoming community that includes arts and culture, activities for youth, families, and seniors, and high-quality housing that is available to everyone.

Key Planning Theme

Unique Places, Captivating Spaces

All elements of our built environment should enhance the character of our community, being not only functional, but aesthetically appropriate.

1.9 Connect Wilmington and Social Media

The Create Wilmington team utilized an online public input forum called Connect Wilmington to collect input on a variety of topics. The team posted several questions and asked the community to weigh-in. To participate, citizens had to register with Connect Wilmington, and could then offer their feedback and comment on and "like" the input of others. Participants could also add photos of places they like and suggest ideas of their own.

When asked to describe their vision for the future of Wilmington, participants described a future Wilmington that is clean and has high-quality development, is bicycle and pedestrian friendly, that celebrates and protects natural resources, has a vibrant downtown, and has rail service to Raleigh. When asked to share photos of their favorite places in Wilmington, the Cape Fear River and Memorial Bridge, the Riverwalk, and other downtown features, Greenfield Lake Park and Gardens, water-based recreation, and mixed-use developments in various parts of town were contributed. When asked for solutions to traffic congestion, participants suggested denser development in certain locations, roundabouts to keep traffic flowing, and the extension of Independence Boulevard to Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway. Ideas for protecting Wilmington's natural resources included denser development, the addition of scenic byways, and the concept of treating Wilmington's natural resources as cultural and economic resources.

Throughout the process, 784 people participated via Connect Wilmington and more than 27,770 people viewed the site.

Key Input

- Add pedestrian bridges over major roadways, including College and Carolina Beach roads.
- Support and implement community gardens
- Clean tech jobs, clean jobs, and technology jobs should be encouraged in Wilmington
- Keep film jobs in Wilmington
- Traffic signals should be better coordinated
- Aesthetic improvements and redevelopment along major corridors are needed
- Reduce parking requirements to help encourage better development patterns
- Allow garage apartments to supplement the housing supply

The team posted several questions, including:

- What is your vision for the future of Wilmington?
- What is one thing that you would like to see happen to make Wilmington better?
- What is something you would like to change about your neighborhood?
- What types of jobs do we need in Wilmington?
- What are your ideas for solving the traffic congestion problems in Wilmington?
- Where are your favorite places to walk in Wilmington?
- What can we do to protect Wilmington's environment and natural resources?
- What parts of town would you like to see redeveloped?
- What can we do to improve workforce housing in Wilmington?

Hillcrest - An Outdated Development Pattern
Wilmington has several public housing developments that, if constructed by today's standards, would not be as isolated, homogenous and spread out.
Source: Google, 2015

Hillcrest Community

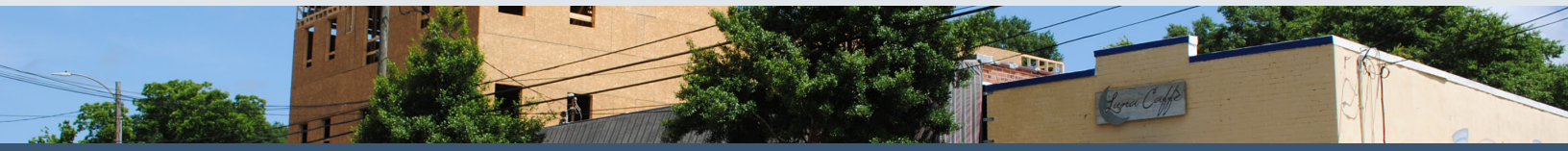
The Create Wilmington team visited the Hillcrest Community and asked residents to share their ideas for the future of their community and what would make Wilmington a better place to live. Residents want the transit system to be improved to make getting their daily needs easier, they wanted more access to parks and recreational opportunities, and more training for jobs.

Growth Factors Report
6.0

This report examines many of the issues associated with public housing, including locations, housing affordability, and others.

"Lunch & Learn" and Other Tools

Beyond collecting input, the team set out to share information about planning best practices, the current conditions in Wilmington, and other relevant topics of interest. To this end, a series of "lunch and learn" seminars were held, information went out in the city's general newsletter, and the Create Wilmington team utilized social media tools to share information.



2 Alternative Future Visions (Scenario Planning)

2.1 Current Trends
2.2 Creating Live-Work Places
2.3 Transit-oriented Development
2.4 Urban Centers and Neighborhood Nodes
2.5 Community Corridors and Main Streets
2.6 Neighborhood Transitions

Under Construction (Top)
Infill development on Castle Street, a concept supported by the community.
Source: City of Wilmington

Public Meeting for Alternative Future Visions
A resident considers the impacts of various development scenarios (image opposite).
Source: City of Wilmington

"If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."

— Yogi Berra

Introduction

Following the Neighborhood Planning Area meetings, citizen input was consolidated and several "Alternative Future Visions" were created to illustrate how Wilmington might grow and change over the next 25 years. At a public launch, citizens were invited to review and weigh-in on these visions. Participants were asked to identify trends from each of the six visions that they were in favor of with a green dot and those that they were not in favor of with a red dot. Following the meeting, the Alternative Future Visions were posted on Connect Wilmington so that citizens could continue to review and evaluate them. The citizen-prioritized trends were incorporated into the Growth Strategies Maps.

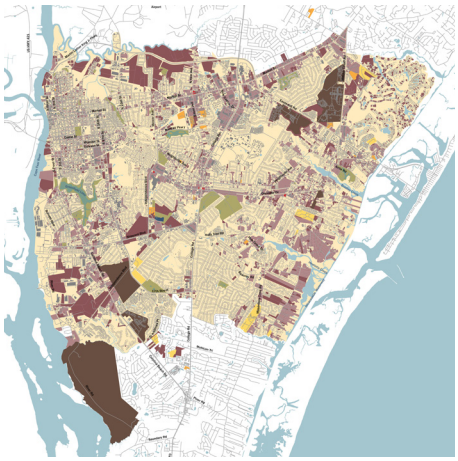
Box Set Cross-Reference
Growth Strategies Maps

Source (All Images): City of Wilmington

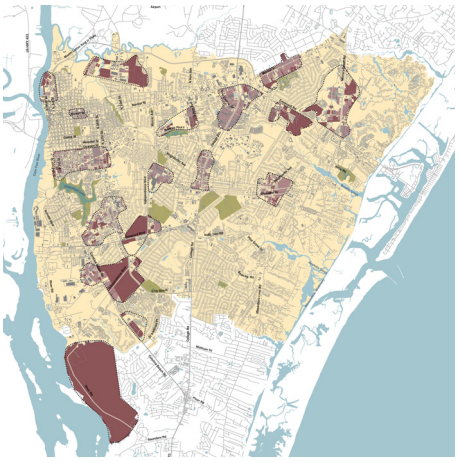
- "Thumbs Up" (Citizens Agree/Approve/Support)
- "Thumbs Down" (Citizens Disagree/Do Not Approve/Do Not Support)

Alternative Future Visions

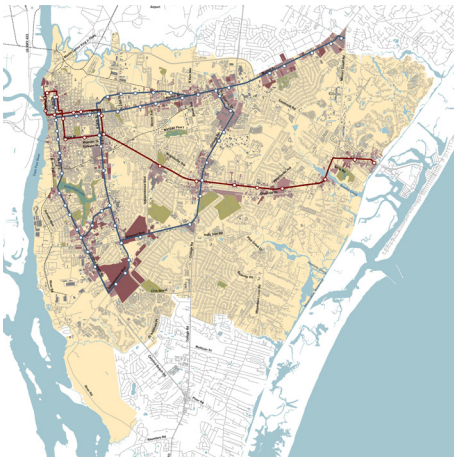
A series of Alternative Future Visions (scenarios) were developed to identify ways in which the city could grow and redevelop in the future. Each vision represents a potential scenario for future growth and is built around a series of ideas and strategies on how and where to grow. These alternative future visions were not mutually exclusive; participants were asked to identify the ideas and strategies from each alternative that were most important to them and which they believed may be appropriate.



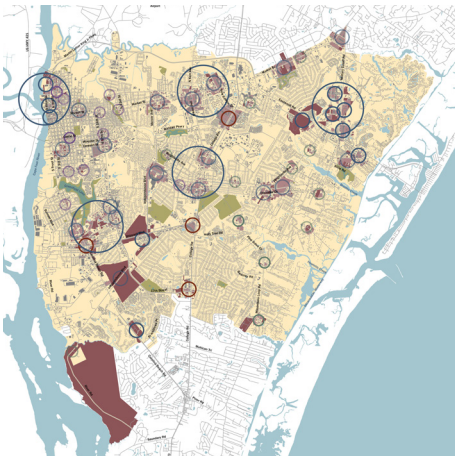
Current Trends
This scenario, originally presented as "Business as Usual," focused on the continuation of current development trends. Under this scenario no major changes would be made to development patterns and trends.



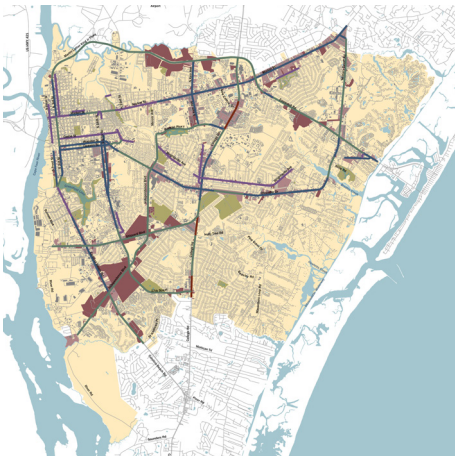
Creating Live-Work Places
This scenario focuses on connecting housing to jobs by creating and expanding residential communities around existing employment centers and creating new employment centers and mixed-use communities.



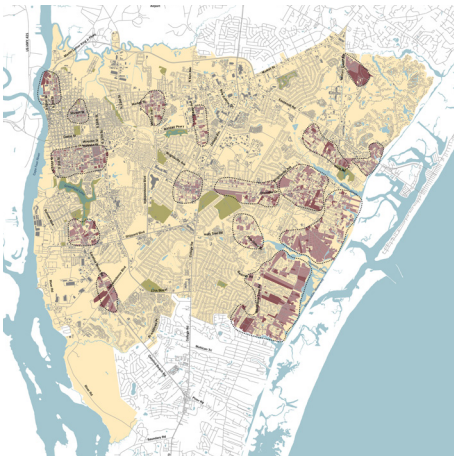
Transit-oriented Development
This scenario focuses on creating a safe, clean, and reliable transit system and concentrating density around transit stop locations.



Urban Centers and Neighborhood Nodes
This scenario focuses on creating and expanding mixed-use centers in already urbanized areas and strengthening existing and planned mixed-use developments.



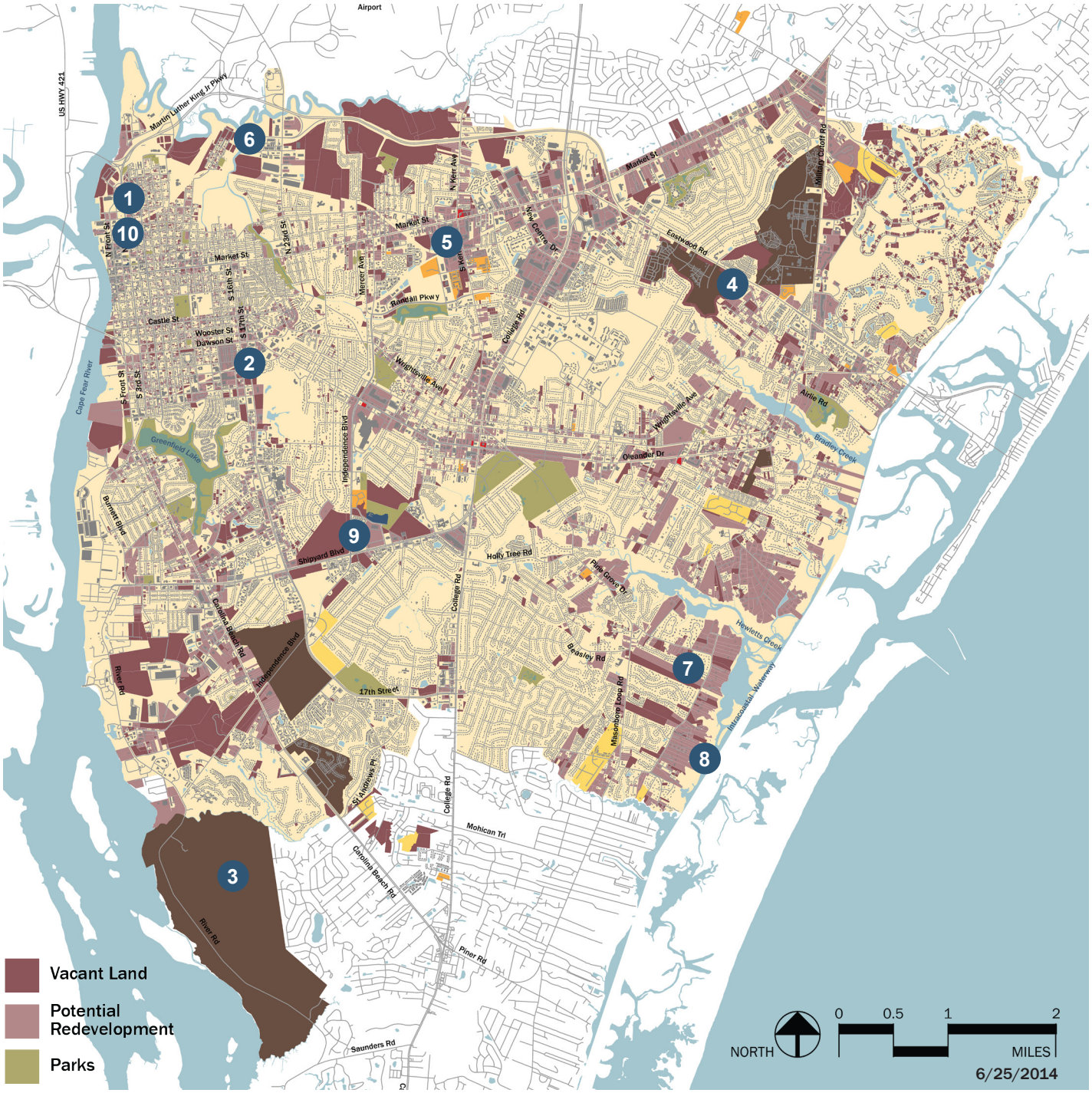
Community Corridors and Main Streets
This scenario focuses on improving the form, function, and aesthetics of roadways and improving connections to adjacent neighborhoods.



Neighborhood Transitions
This scenario focuses on protecting the character of the city's unique neighborhoods and identifying appropriate transitions for neighborhoods already experiencing change.

2.1 Current Trends*

* Originally presented as "Business as Usual."



Current Development Trends

- Master Planned Communities
- Retail/ Commercial
- Multi-family Projects
- Residential Subdivisions
- Office Buildings

Current trends were collected using recent development and redevelopment data in Wilmington. These reflect contemporary growth patterns that occur in the current regulatory and real estate market environment. This is sometimes called "business as usual".

Top 10 Trends Prioritized by the Community

The following are the trends from the "Current Trends" scenario that received the most positive feedback, from both the public launch and comments received online. Trends are ranked in order of priority given. Numbers correspond with map locations on previous page.

1. Develop more office buildings and hotels in downtown.
2. Redevelop Hillcrest public housing similar to Taylor Homes in the Northside.
3. Complete the River Lights master-planned community.
4. Complete the Autumn Hall mixed-use development plan.
5. Develop large vacant and underutilized tracts as stand- alone multi-family projects.
6. Complete the development of the Love Grove neighborhood.
7. Develop cluster subdivisions on remaining large vacant or underutilized tracts of land in residentially-zoned areas.
8. Subdivide individual large single-family parcels for single-family development.
9. Create master-planned communities on remaining large tracts of land.
10. Create an elevated park/viewing area above the Hilton's southern parking lot that connects with second floor entrance of hotel.

Source: City of Wilmington

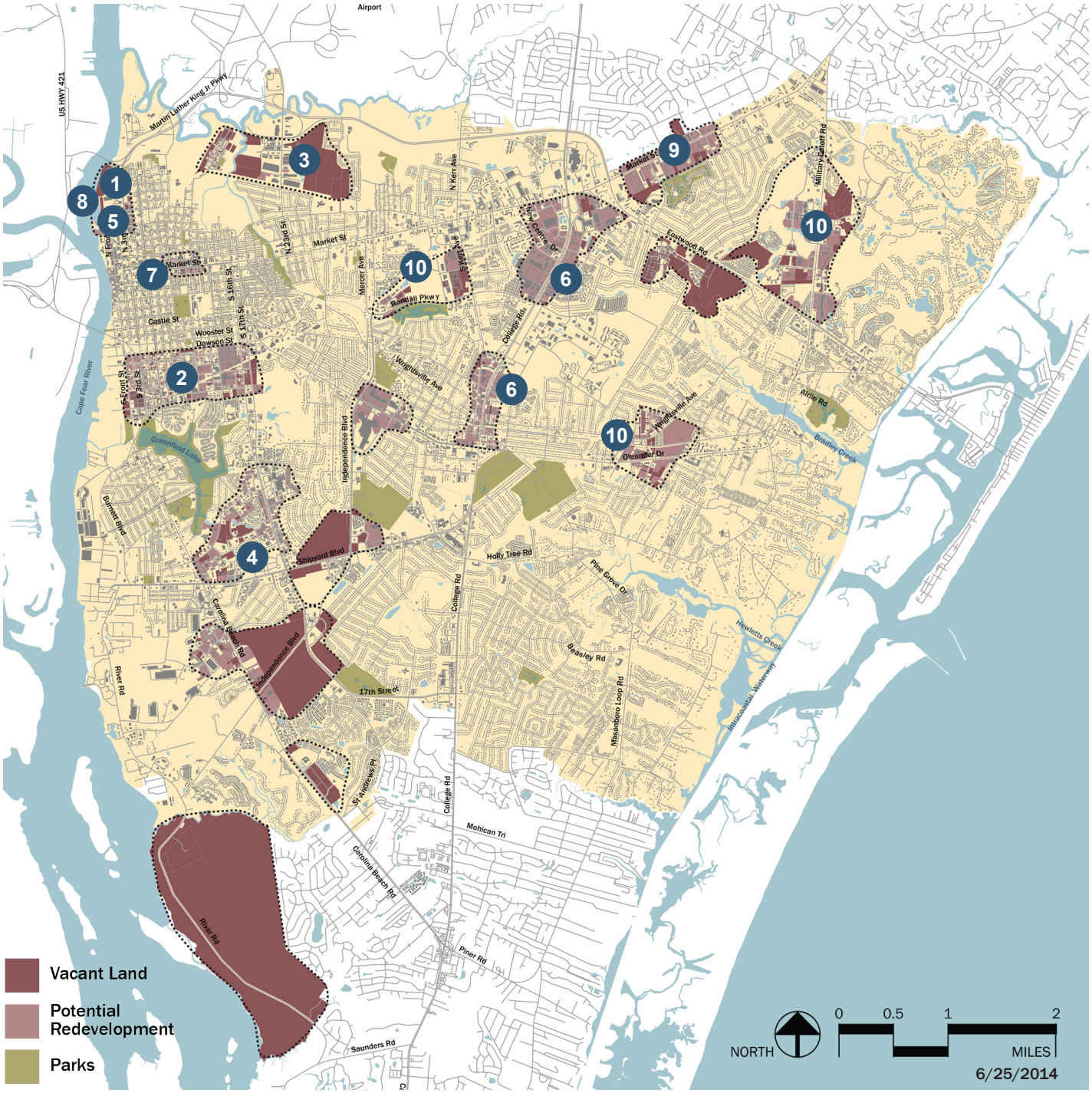
Source: City of Wilmington

Source: Google, 2015

Major Themes

- Create and develop master-planned projects on remaining large vacant tracts of land.
- Develop and redevelop individual vacant or underutilized properties.
- Develop vacant and underutilized single-family-zoned sites at 2-3 units per acre.
- Develop multi-family projects on vacant or underutilized land around the university and along major road corridors.

2.2 Creating Live-Work Places



What is "Live-Work"?

Live-work areas are those where residents are able to operate studios, small workshops or businesses in the same building where they live. This allows for zero-commute to work, alleviating traffic congestion and allowing workers to spend more time at home or at work and less time commuting in cars.

Key Planning Theme

Economic Opportunity

Fostering opportunities for economic growth and development that enhance the concepts of each of the other themes is critical to future prosperity.

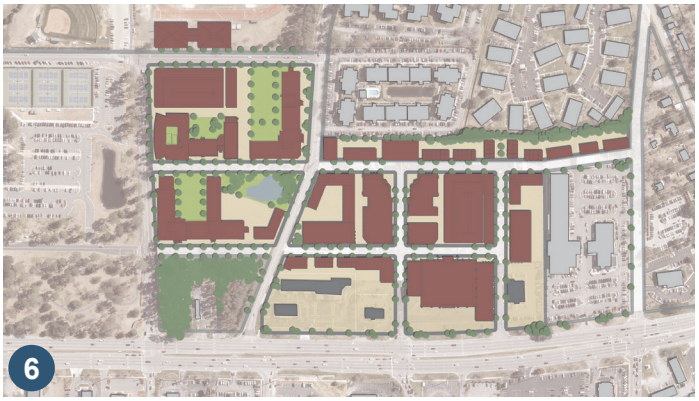
Top 10 Trends Prioritized by the Community

The following are the trends from the "Creating Live-Work Places" scenario that received the most positive feedback, from both the public launch and comments received online. Trends are ranked in order of priority given. Numbers correspond with map locations on previous page.

1. Foster the development of arts-based entrepreneurship in the Brooklyn Arts District and in the area surrounding the former Coca-Cola bottling facility. Encourage live-work building types and affordable studio spaces.
2. Encourage more creative, technology-based and light manufacturing start-ups in the Southside industrial area.
3. Develop the area adjacent to the North 23rd Street employment corridor in a well-connected and coordinated way so that residential areas are within a short drive or bike ride to employment. Create a film-based mixed-use district.
4. Develop medium-density housing around New Hanover Regional Medical Center; ensure walkability.
5. Provide housing for Cape Fear Community College students within walking distance to campus.
6. Use the K-mart parking lot, the UNCW Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and nearby vacant land to create a mixed-use academic village, giving UNCW an urban center.
7. Encourage redevelopment of the former Coca-Cola bottling facility as an employment incubator, with special emphasis on job training for nearby residents.
8. Build more offices and employment uses in the Northern Riverfront.
9. Develop housing, retail and good sidewalks along Market Street; make connections to employment area.
10. Connect streets to create a walkable urban grid structure. Connect offices with housing and retail.

Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Wilmington

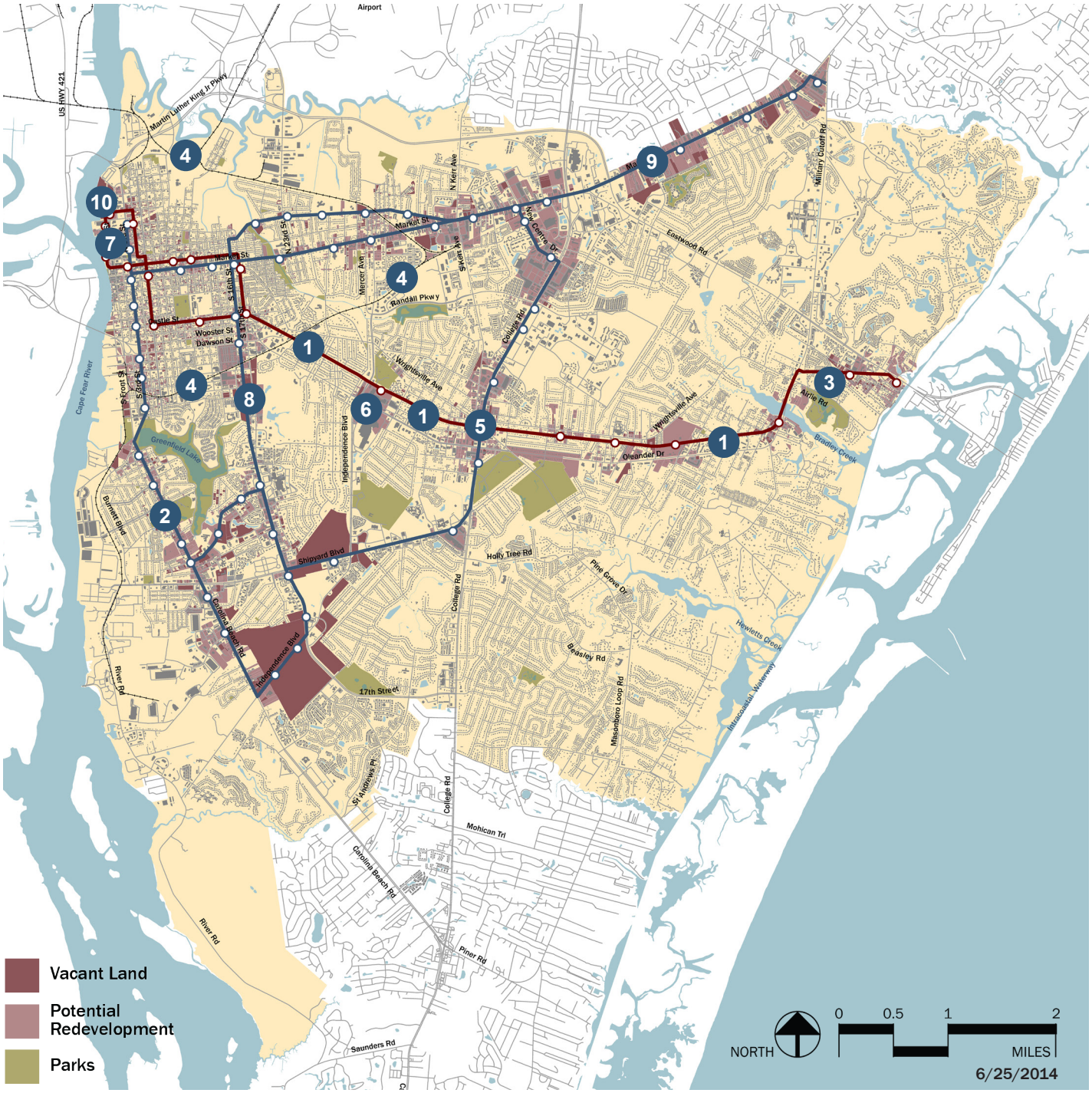


Source: City of Wilmington

Major Themes

- Create new and enhance existing employment centers.
- Connect people with jobs and reduce commute times.
- Focus on sidewalks, bikeways, and trails.
- Create efficient road connections as new development occurs.
- Introduce a mix of housing types to provide affordable options.

2.3 Transit-oriented Development



Potential Transit Types

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus lines that operate in dedicated travel lanes and rights-of-way with platforms and off-board fare collection at transit stops and bus priority at major intersections.

Modern Streetcar

Passenger rail vehicles that run on tracks along public streets and within public rights-of-way with platforms and off-board fare collection at transit stops.

Conventional Bus

Buses operating within existing vehicle travel lanes with dedicated routes and fixed bus stops and on-board fare collection.

Top 10 Trends Prioritized by the Community

The following are the trends from the "Transit-oriented Development" scenario that received the most positive feedback, from both the public launch and comments received online. Trends are ranked in order of priority given. Numbers correspond with map locations on previous page.

1. Bring back the historic streetcar line from Downtown to Wrightsville Beach. Run alongside River to the Sea Bikeway and existing public right-of-way.
2. Provide comfortable places to wait for transit with protection from the weather.
3. Redevelop the Galleria with a mix of housing, employment and retail. Create a welcoming public space at the transit stop.
4. Utilize existing rail rights-of-way to establish a light rail system that connects major destinations across the city.
5. Pedestrian bridges in high-density/high-traffic locations.
6. Upgrade Hanover Center and Independence Mall to accommodate transit. Add housing and a sidewalk network.
7. Use electric-powered buses in the downtown core.
8. Create safe, walkable urban places close to transit stops.
9. Dedicate automobile lane to high-speed buses on Market Street and reduce travel lanes in each direction.
10. Create a series of high-to-medium density transit nodes downtown with tall mixed-use buildings in the North Riverfront.

Citizen Proposed Idea

Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Portland; NACTO

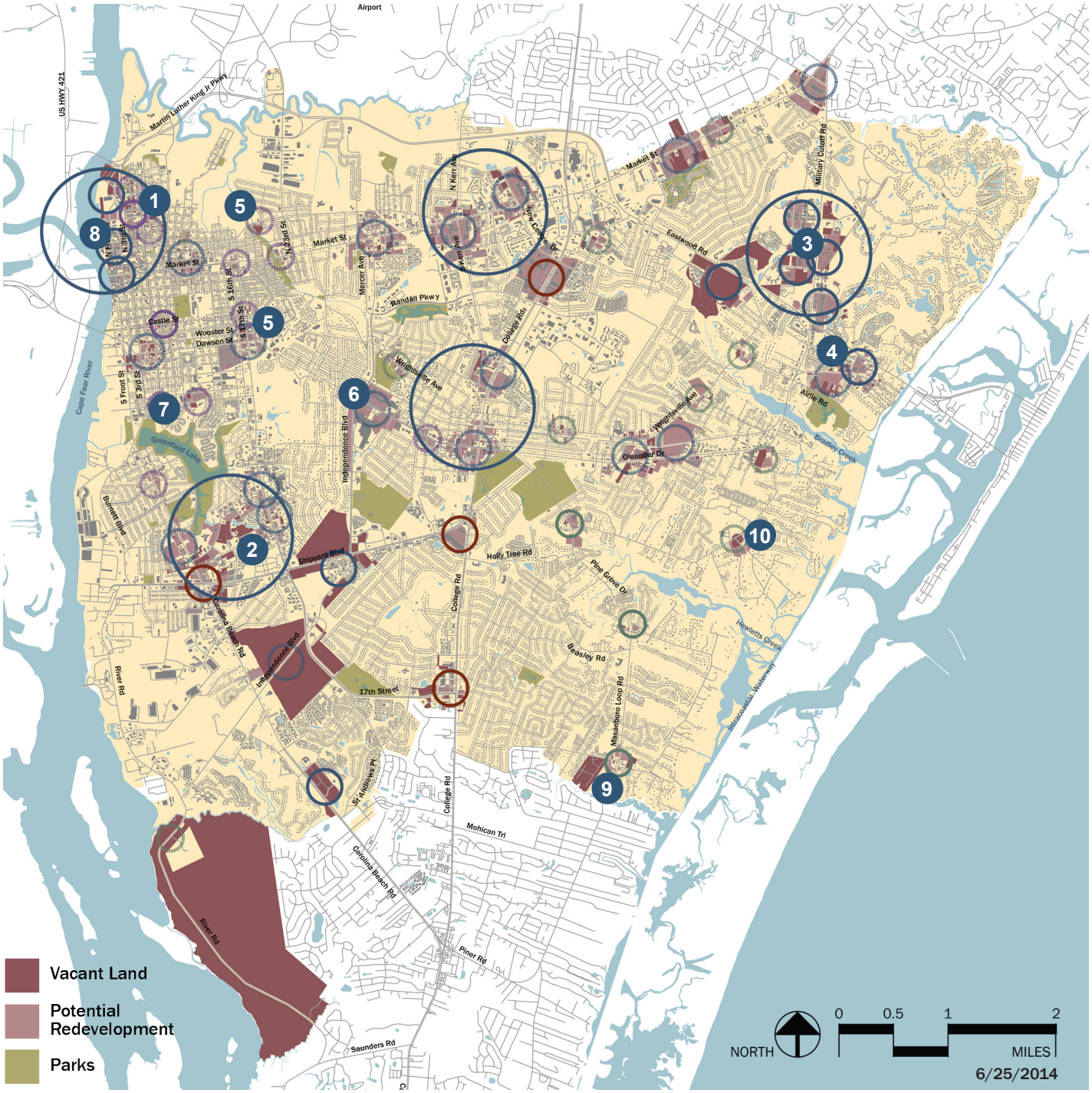
Source: Lower Cape Fear Historical Society

Growth Factors Report
7

Major Themes

- Reduce traffic congestion by creating a safe, clean, and reliable public transit system.
- Reestablish the historic streetcar line from downtown to the beach.
- Make transit stop locations safe and inviting places.
- Focus density around transit stop locations.
- Make our public transit system a source of pride for the community.

2.4 Urban Centers and Neighborhood Nodes



Types of Urban Centers

Urban Mixed Use

Existing

Emerging / Potential

Urban Neighborhood Node

Existing

Emerging / Potential

Neighborhood Node

Existing

Emerging / Potential

Regional Retail

Existing

Current Development Status

Existing

Areas already developed or planned to develop as the type of center indicated.

Emerging

Areas where centers already want to be. These may have existing commercial uses or are located in a logical place where neighborhoods come together.

Potential

Areas for new centers that currently do not exist.

Top 10 Trends Prioritized by the Community

The following are the trends from the "Urban Centers & Neighborhood Nodes" scenario that received the most positive feedback, from both the public launch and comments received online. Trends are ranked in order of priority given. Numbers correspond with map locations on previous page.

1. Develop true vertical mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail.
2. Develop a high-density, walkable, mixed-use district surrounding New Hanover Regional Medical Center
3. Build on the momentum of existing town centers. Focus on making better connections and infill development.
4. Redevelop the Galleria as a pedestrian-focused, mixed-use development with restaurants, retail, and various types of housing.
5. Create small urban centers with services for nearby residents.
6. Fill the surface parking lots of Independence Mall with buildings.
7. Develop a center with industrial aesthetics; mix new and old buildings.
8. Foster a collection of urban centers, places, and neighborhoods in the downtown core with their own identities and primary functions. Update the downtown master plan and create small area plans for each downtown center.
9. Focus new development around existing neighborhood nodes; prioritize sidewalk connections.
10. Create small-scale neighborhood nodes on Greenville Loop Road to provide daily needs to surrounding neighborhoods.

Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Wilmington

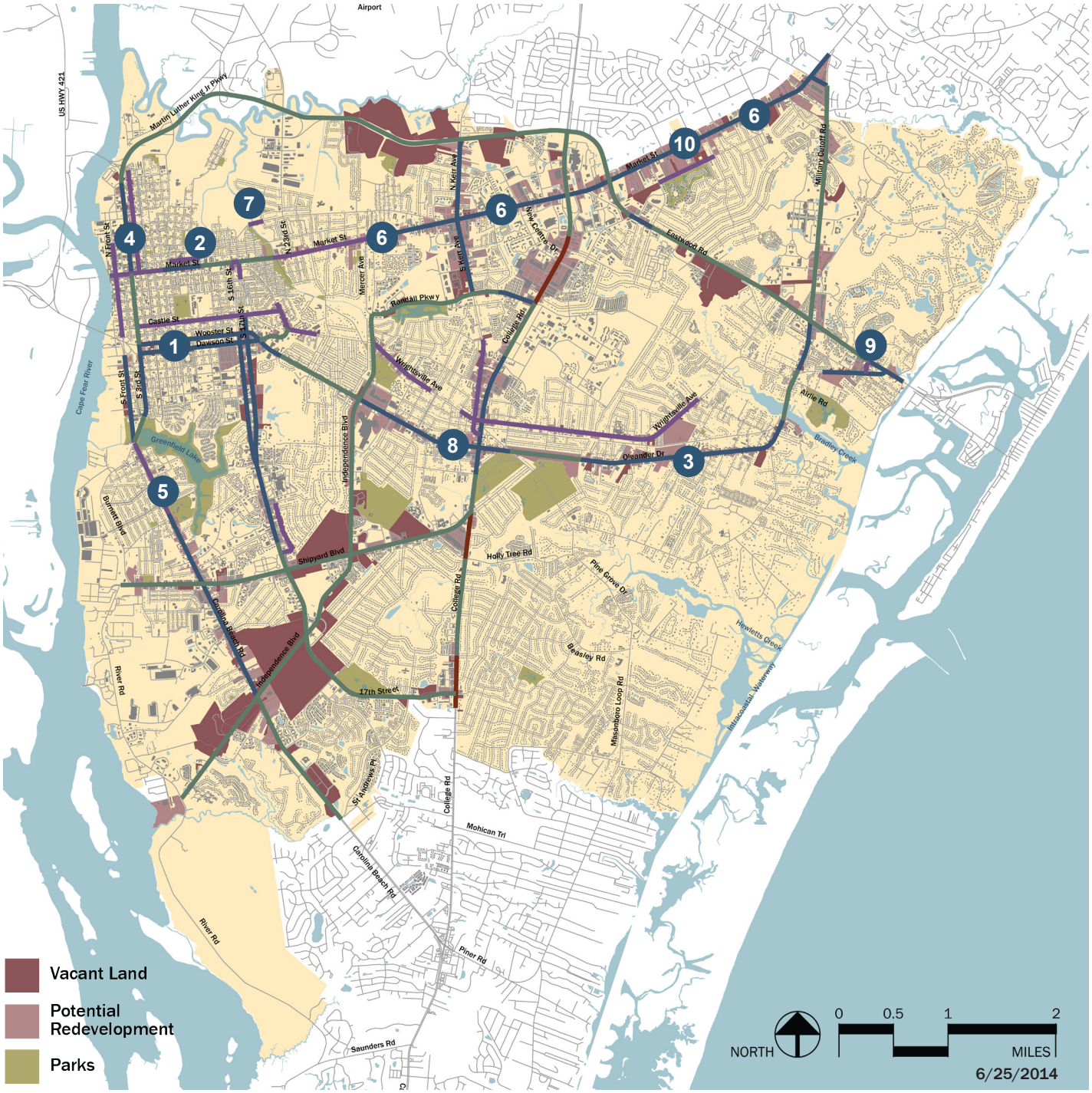
Growth Strategies Report

A. Mixed-use Centers

Major Themes

- Concentrate investment, vertical orientation of buildings, and densities around focal points.
- Focus on walking and biking infrastructure.
- Create active retail environments.
- Increase access to goods and services to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Promote infill of large surface parking lots.

2.5 Community Corridors



Potential Transit Types

Main Street

These are small-scale, pedestrian-friendly streets with shops, on-street parking, and buildings that directly front onto the sidewalk. Medians and streetscape are often used to enhance the corridor.

Regional Main Street

These are multimodal thoroughfares with walkable qualities. Many buildings front onto the street. Parking is encouraged on the street and behind the building as these areas develop.

Strip Commercial

These are multi-lane roadways with limited pedestrian access. These are primarily for automobile-oriented shopping. Parking is placed in a large building setback.

Parkway

These are scenic multimodal roadways with trees and landscaping. Medians, bike and pedestrian trails, and limited access are common elements.

Top 10 Trends Prioritized by the Community

The following are the trends from the "Community Corridors" scenario that received the most positive feedback, from both the public launch and comments received online. Trends are ranked in order of priority given. Numbers correspond with map locations on previous page.

1. Encourage mixed-use development at the gateways of Dawson/Wooster at 3rd Street and at 17th Street.
2. Redevelop areas along Market and Princess streets between 8th and 12th streets.
3. Redevelop vacant shopping centers and strip malls along Oleander Drive between Hawthorne Drive and Greenville Loop Road.
4. Create vertical mixed-use corridors in the heart of downtown.
5. Revitalize the commercial area along Carolina Beach Road at Sunset Park as a neighborhood-scale main street. Introduce new development with ground-floor retail, restore older storefront buildings, and enhance the streetscape.
6. Implement the recommendations of the Market Street Corridor Study.
7. Revitalize the small commercial area at Princess Place Drive and 21st Street as a neighborhood-scale main street. Introduce new development with ground-floor retail, restore older storefront buildings, and enhance the streetscape.
8. Infill setback areas along portions of Oleander Drive and College Road near their intersection.
9. Redevelop Pavilion Place as a pedestrian-focused main street, connecting new uses at Lumina Commons and Wrightsville Avenue.
10. Develop a mixed-use town center on Market Street, east of Cardinal Drive, similar to Mayfaire and Autumn Hall.

Source: City of Wilmington

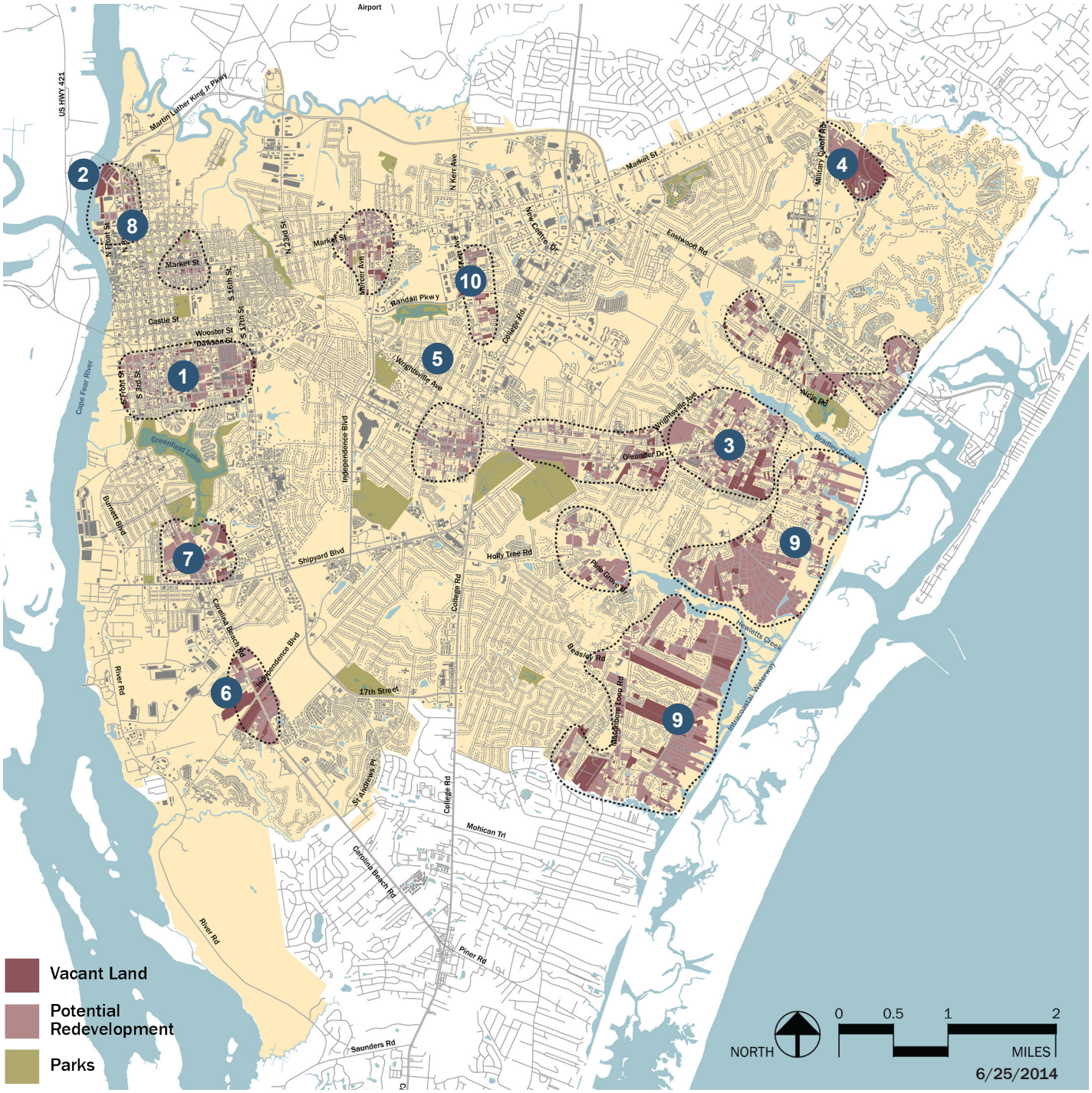
Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Wilmington

Major Themes

- Create corridors that are unique public spaces.
- Focus development along roadways, not in adjacent neighborhoods.
- Improve safety and function by controlling driveways and street intersections.
- Provide sidewalks, bikeways, and trails to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Continue dependency on automobile travel with some improved bus service.

2.6 Neighborhood Transitions



What are "Neighborhood Transitions"?

Many of Wilmington neighborhoods contain a great deal of potentially redevelopable land, but these areas are known for their residential character and development pattern. The Neighborhood Transitions vision intends to manage the change that these areas are certain to face by minimizing the negative impacts of new development. The concept also favors the repurposing of existing buildings in neighborhoods that have faced decades of disinvestment.

Key Planning Theme

Unique Places, Captivating Spaces

All elements of our built environment should enhance the character of our community, being not only functional, but aesthetically appropriate.

Top 10 Trends Prioritized by the Community

The following are the trends from the "Neighborhood Transitions" scenario that received the most positive feedback, from both the public launch and comments received online. Trends are ranked in order of priority given. Numbers correspond with map locations on previous page.

1. Identify and create incentives for the conversion of old industrial buildings to new employment and housing uses.
2. Create a coordinated master plan for the northern riverfront area that considers transitions to Brooklyn Arts District and Cape Fear Community College.
3. Establish the architectural character of transitioning neighborhoods and use design guidelines to ensure compatibility.
4. Develop and redevelop with multi-family housing (areas north of Old MacCumber Station Road). Establish bike and pedestrian connections to surrounding area.
5. Allow for additional housing types such as backyard cottages, courtyard cottages, and townhomes within established residential areas throughout the city.
6. Develop and redevelop parcels with single-family homes and connect housing to employment.
7. Redevelop the Starway Flea Market. Create roadway connections from Carolina Beach Road to adjacent neighborhoods. Make a smooth transition from high to low densities.
8. Address development in the transition area between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.
9. Combine lots to create a sensible block structure as opposed to disconnected street segments. Create walkable waterfront villages.
10. Develop and redevelop with higher-density residential along South Kerr Avenue, north and south of Randall Parkway. Identify appropriate housing types.

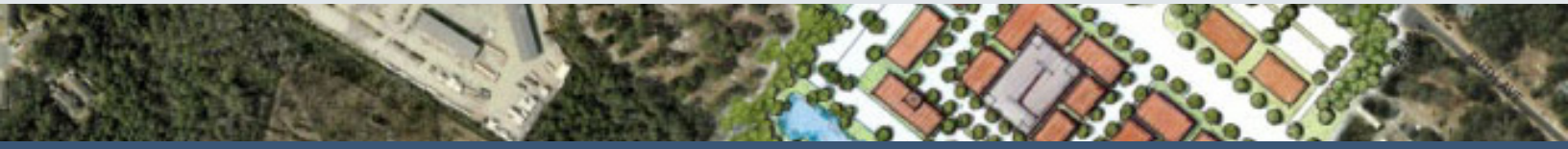
Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Wilmington

Source: City of Wilmington

Major Themes

- Combine underutilized lots to create connected, coordinated developments.
- Focus on accessory housing.
- Create softened transitions between commercial and residential areas.
- Introduce a variety of housing types.
- Establish neighborhood conservation districts with guidelines for infill and redevelopment.



3 Policy Audit & Legacy Planning Documents

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

Master Plan
Master plan drawing from the *Market Street Corridor Study* of the area near Gordon Road and Market Street (image above).
Source: City of Wilmington

Plans
Decision makers must consider numerous plans and policies on a regular basis (image opposite).
Source: City of Wilmington

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

— Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Policy Audit & Legacy Planning Documents

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

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

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

Choices: The City of Wilmington Future Land Use Plan 2004-2025, the most recent long-range planning document adopted by the city, is replaced by the Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Collaboration

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

Key Planning Theme

Regional Collaboration

Collaboration with other local governments, including New Hanover County and surrounding towns and counties, is critical to Wilmington's and the region's success.

Key Planning Theme

Changing Places and Revitalizing Spaces

Envisioning suitable infill and redevelopment and optimizing existing development will be critical to our community's well-being, not only downtown, but within neighborhoods across the city.

3.1 Regional Plans

FOCUS
Regional Growth Plan
A regional plan for sustainable growth for Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender counties.

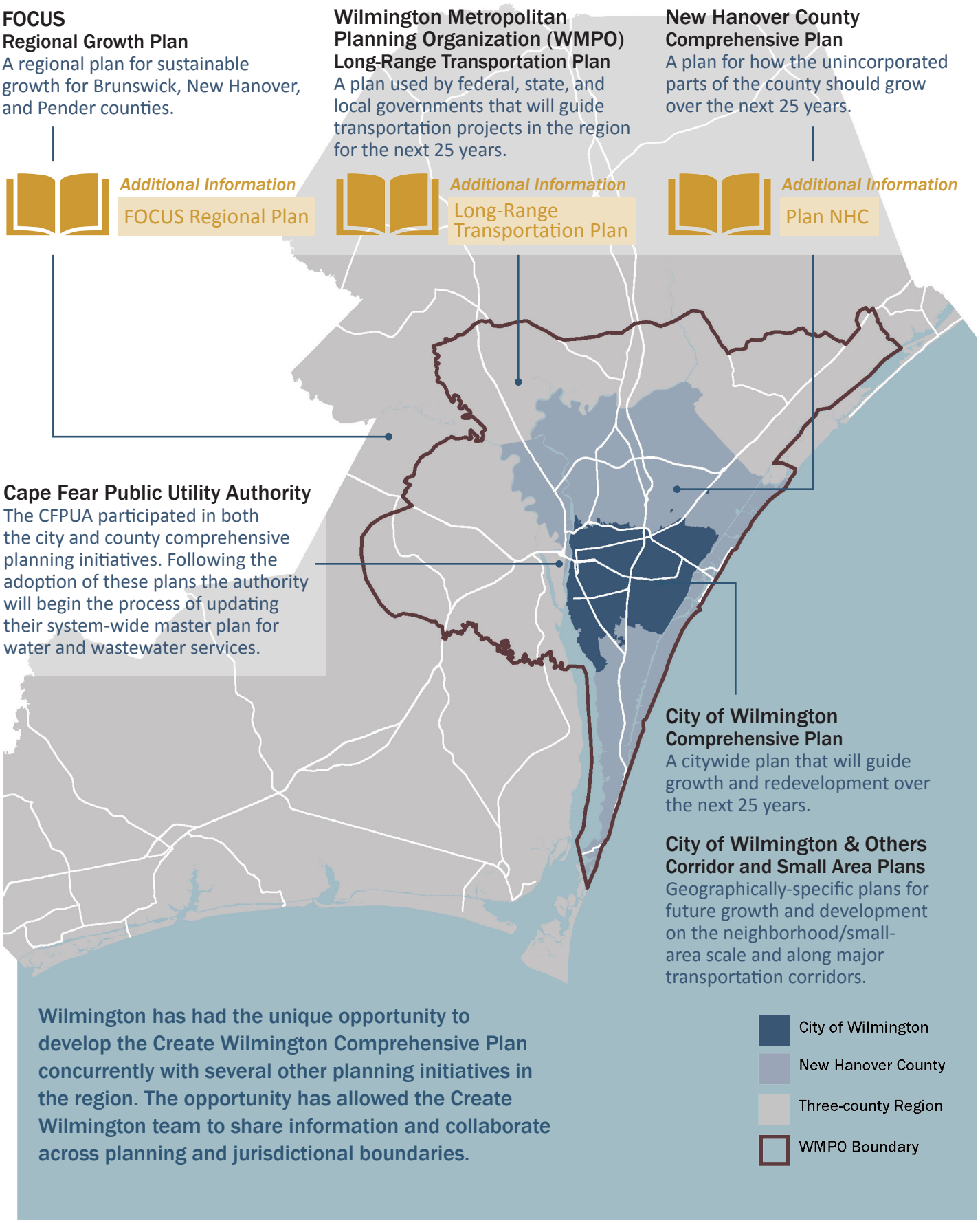
Additional Information
FOCUS Regional Plan

Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO)
Long-Range Transportation Plan
A plan used by federal, state, and local governments that will guide transportation projects in the region for the next 25 years.

Additional Information
Long-Range Transportation Plan

New Hanover County
Comprehensive Plan
A plan for how the unincorporated parts of the county should grow over the next 25 years.

Additional Information
Plan NHC



Cape Fear Public Utility Authority
The CFPUA participated in both the city and county comprehensive planning initiatives. Following the adoption of these plans the authority will begin the process of updating their system-wide master plan for water and wastewater services.

City of Wilmington
Comprehensive Plan
A citywide plan that will guide growth and redevelopment over the next 25 years.

City of Wilmington & Others
Corridor and Small Area Plans
Geographically-specific plans for future growth and development on the neighborhood/small-area scale and along major transportation corridors.

Wilmington has had the unique opportunity to develop the Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan concurrently with several other planning initiatives in the region. The opportunity has allowed the Create Wilmington team to share information and collaborate across planning and jurisdictional boundaries.

3.2 Small-area and Corridor Plans

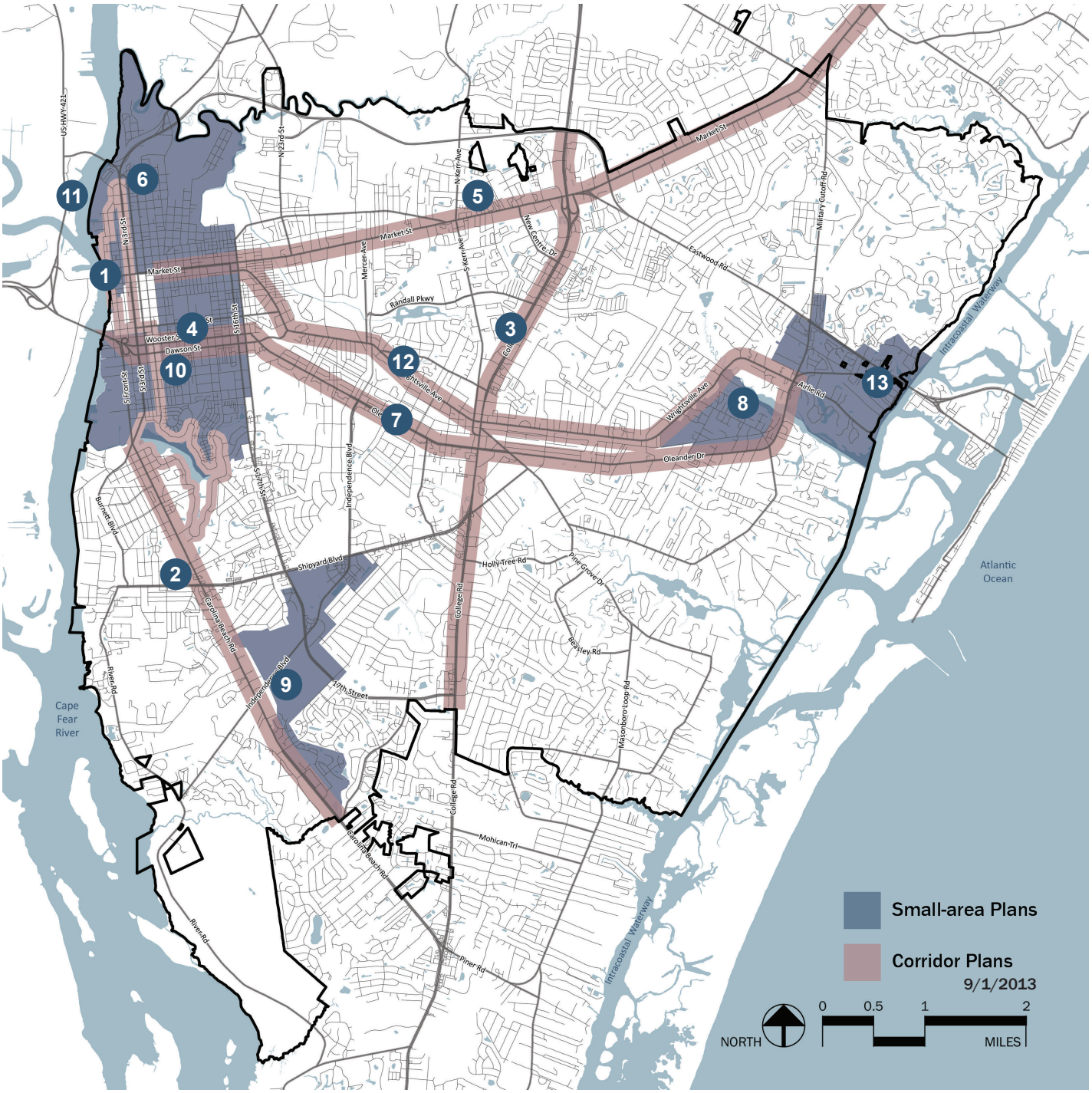
There are a number of neighborhood, small-area, and corridor plans that address a small geographic area of the city or a specific roadway. Each of these plans are currently being implemented and will continue to supplement the city's comprehensive planning efforts. Neighborhood plans, as the name implies,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

Additional Information

www.wilmingtonnc.gov

Active Neighborhood, Small-area, & Corridor Plans

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



Small-area & Corridor Plans

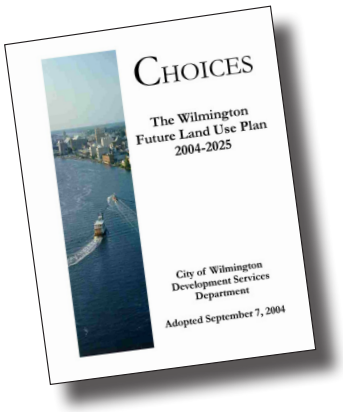
This map depicts the areas of the city for which a small area, neighborhood, or corridor plan has been adopted.

Note: Numbers on map correspond to list on previous page.

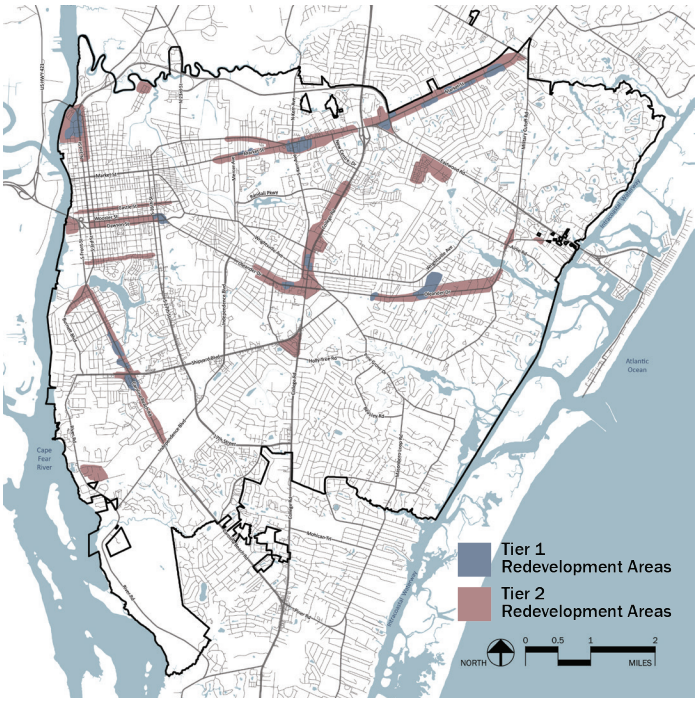
Key Planning Theme

Changing Places, Revitalizing Spaces

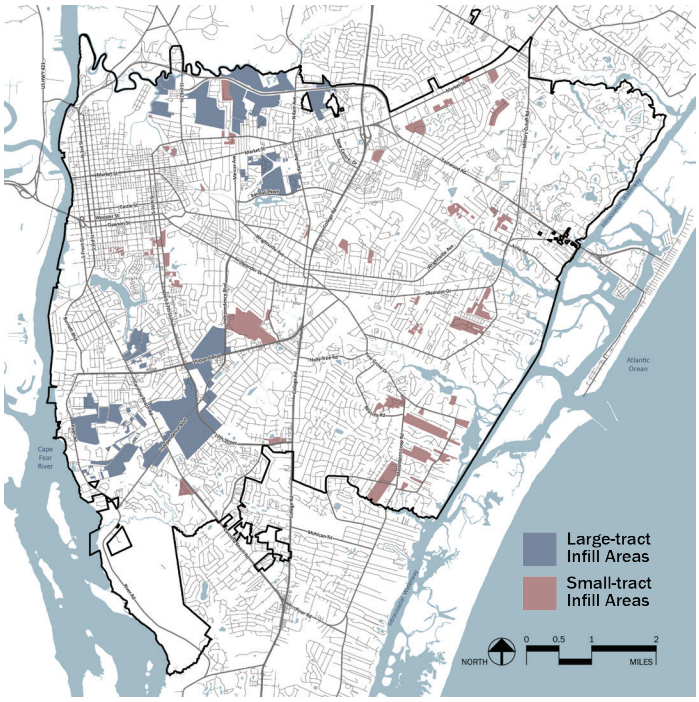
The built environment encompasses places and spaces created or modified by people, including buildings, parks, land use patterns, and transportation systems.



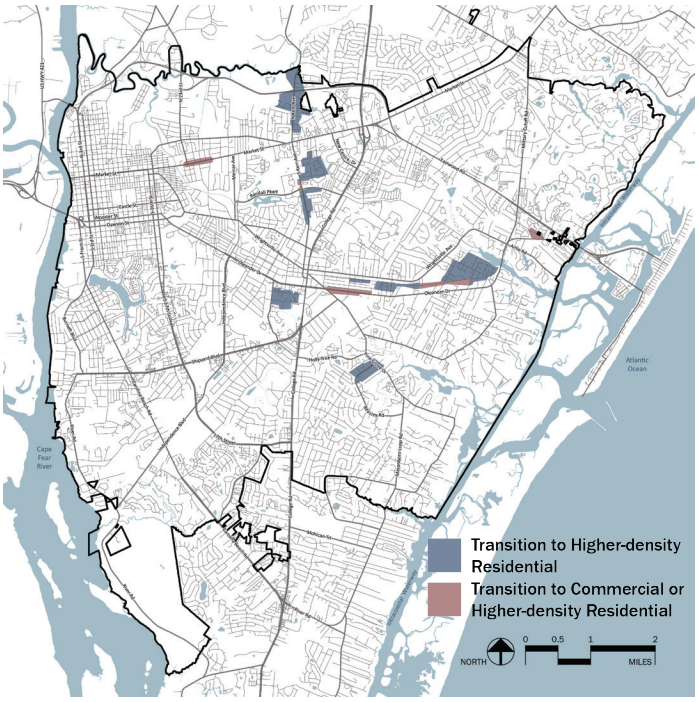
Choices: The City of Wilmington Future Land Use Plan 2004-2025 was adopted by City Council in 2004 and was created to guide the physical development of the city over a 20-year period. The plan is based on three primary development trends that are expected to occur during the plan's horizon: infill development, redevelopment, and transitioning residential areas. The plan does not cover the entire city, but rather focuses only on particular areas and parcels of land.



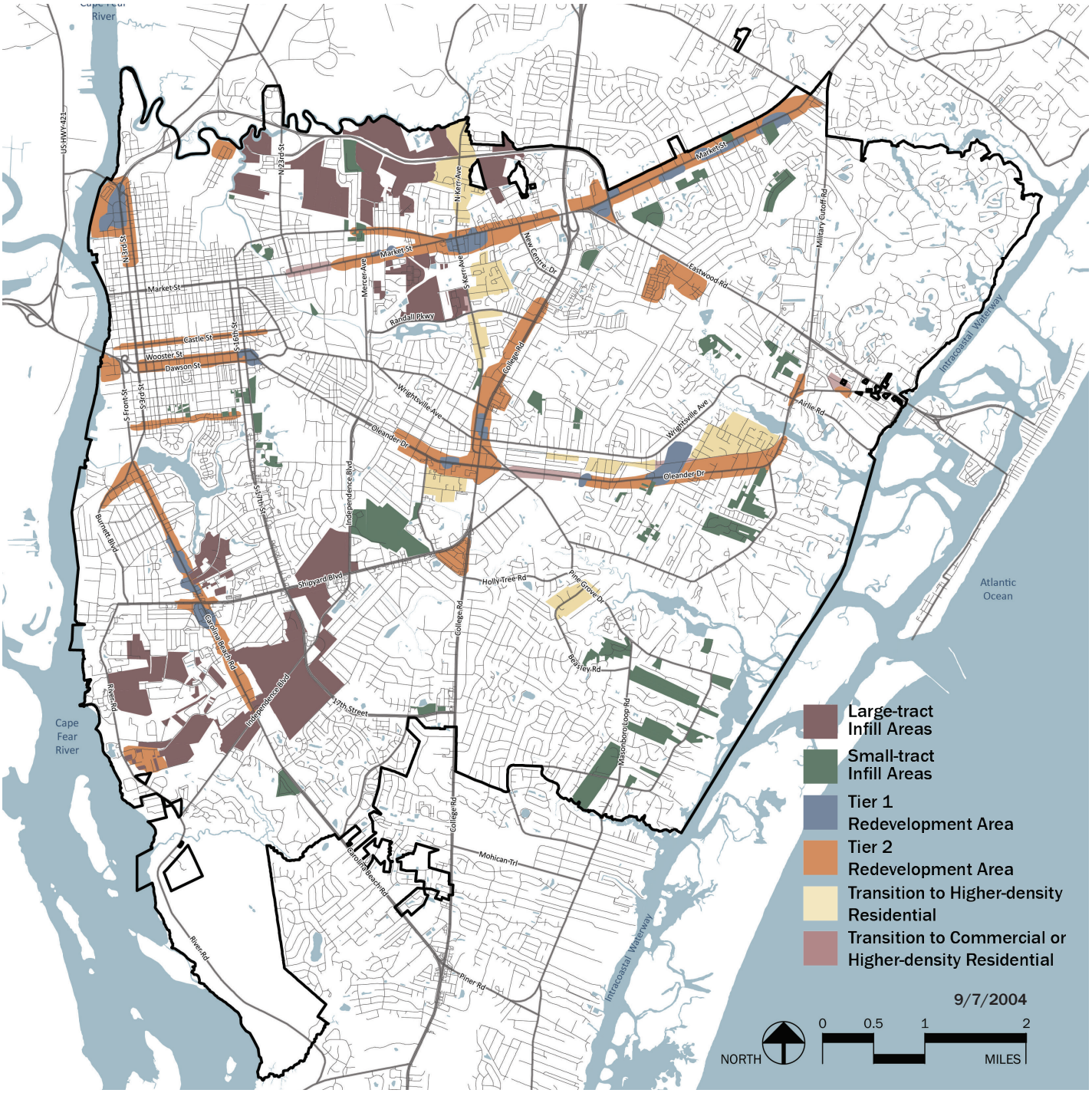
Redevelopment Areas
The plan identifies two tiers of redevelopment. Tier 1 areas have the greatest need for quality redevelopment and Tier 2 areas represent commercial areas in decline.



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



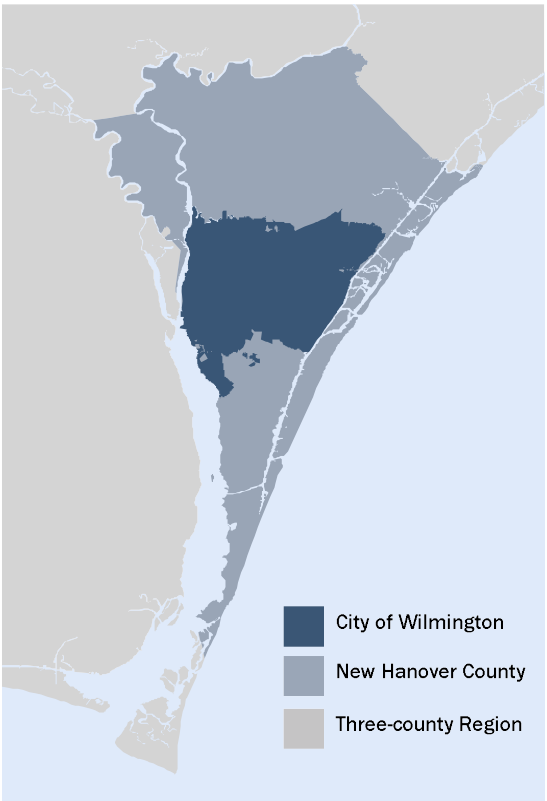
Transition Areas
The plan identifies two land use transitions, areas transitioning to higher-density residential uses and areas transitioning from residential to commercial or higher-density residential uses.



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

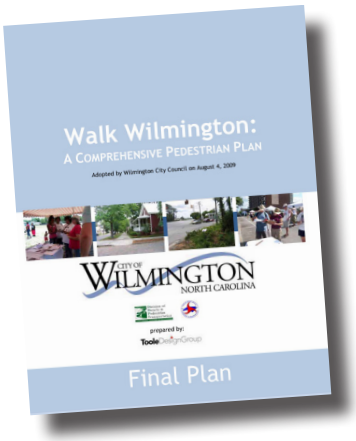
3.4 Function-related Plans

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

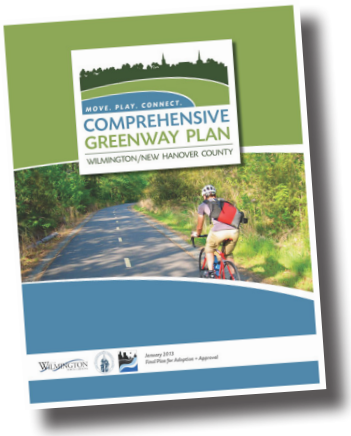


City and County
The city of Wilmington and New Hanover County work together to plan and develop a cohesive, functional region.

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



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



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

Key Planning Theme

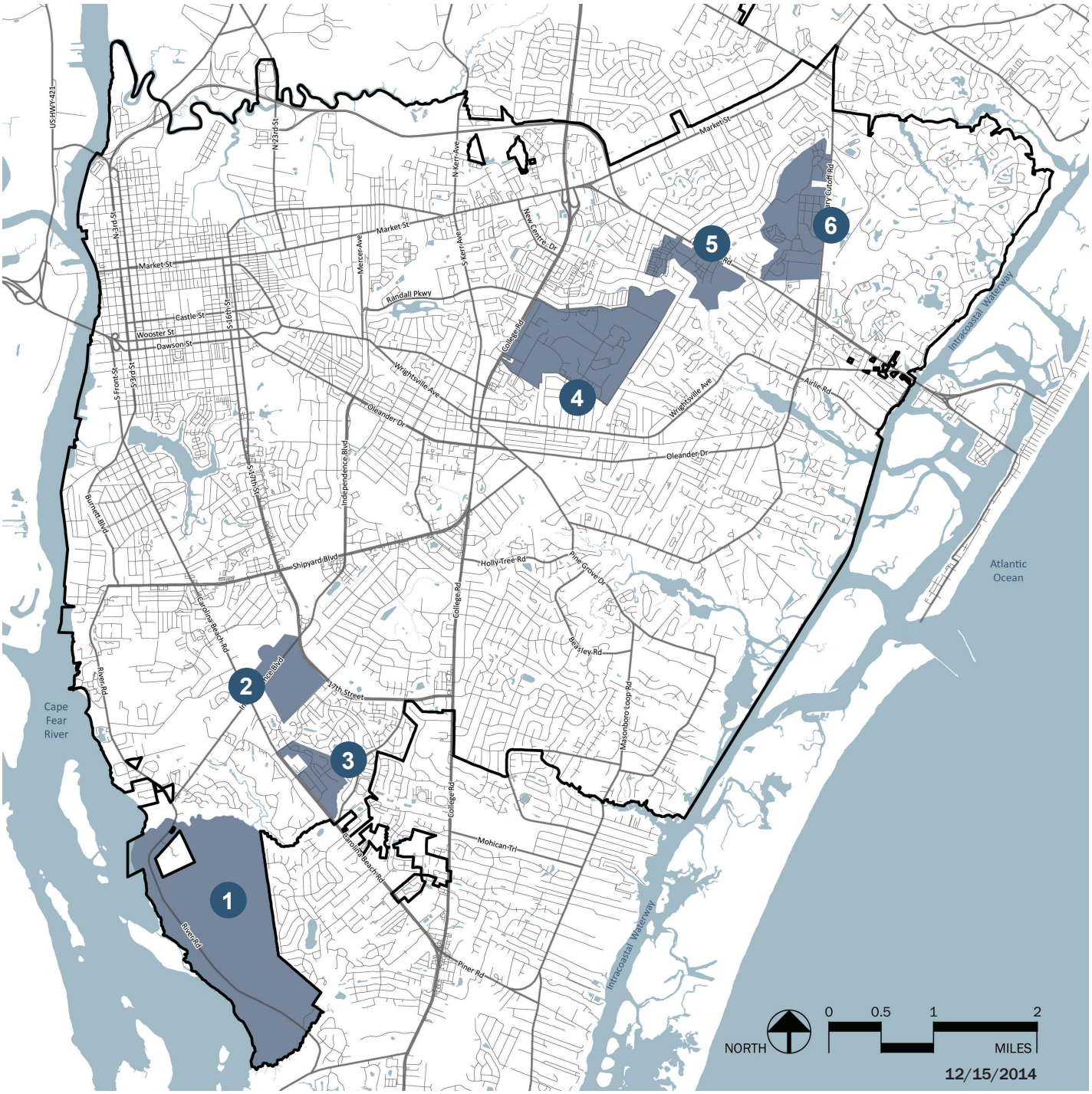
Getting Around

Alternatives to automobile transportation, as well as other options for local and regional mass transit should be explored.

Key Planning Theme

Unique Places, Captivating Spaces

All elements of our built environment should enhance the character of our community, being not only functional, but aesthetically appropriate.



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

Mixed-use Master-planned Sites

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

Contributors

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

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

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

The members of the steering committee are:

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

City Council

Mayor Bill Saffo

Mayor Pro-Tem Margaret Haynes

Neil Anderson

Paul Lawler

Kevin O'Grady

Laura Padgett (former member)

Charlie Rivenbark

Earl Sheridan

City of Wilmington Staff

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- David Cowell, P.E.
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- Lynn Heim
- Roger Johnson
- Dave Mayes, P.E.
- Tony McEwen
- Suraiya Motsinger
- Suzanne Rogers
- Ron Satterfield, AICP