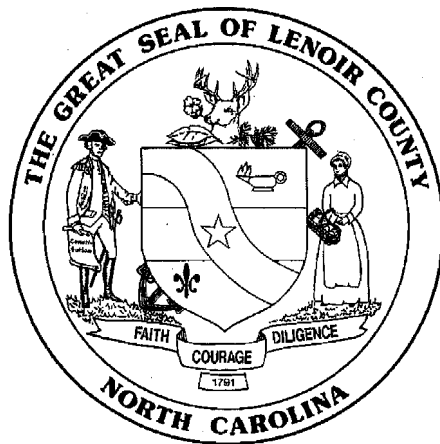


Future Land Use Plan

Lenoir County, NC



Revised Draft

May 17, 2001

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Section 1¾ Introduction

In December 2000, the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners initiated preparation of a Land Use Plan for the unincorporated areas of the county. The overall mission of the County's plan is to *foster economic development and the creation of jobs for the county's residents and to place minimal constraints on individual and business decisions while enhancing the county's environment and quality of life*. The plan will be a resource tool and guide that will help the Board of Commissioners and other public bodies make decisions concerning the future of the county. The plan also contains comprehensive information and land use and development guidance that will assist private landowners and developers in making decisions that are consistent with the goals of the county. The plan is designed so that it is not dependent on zoning for implementation—the traditional plan implementation tool.

The Board of Commissioners also authorized preparation of two related land use and development ordinances—a manufactured housing park ordinance and subdivision regulations. These ordinances, when adopted, will assist the county in managing future development.

The County Planning Board, with assistance from the county's administrative staff, provided overall direction for the development of the plan. The Planning Board, appointed by the Board of Commissioners, contains a cross-section of county residents from all geographic areas.

Planning area

The four municipalities in Lenoir County have a major impact on land use and development through the services that they deliver and their planning and code enforcement in the adjacent unincorporated areas. Likewise, the state chartered NC Global TransPark (GTP) will have major implications for development in the county if the facility develops according to plans. Nevertheless, while recognizing the impact of these forces, this plan addresses only the unincorporated area of the county.

Community participation

The Board of Commissioners and the Planning Board committed to a community-based approach for development of the Future Land Use Plan. This approach included the involvement of as many residents as possible in the planning program.

Community Meetings

Meeting one. The first step to involve residents was to hold four community meetings at convenient locations throughout the planning area to hear the public's concerns about future development. These meetings focused on two areas of issues and concerns: what residents *love about their community and would not want to change* and *what residents would like to change*. A total of approximately 95 residents attended these meetings. A detailed summary of the first community meetings is included in Appendix 1.

In addition to identifying planning issues and concerns, residents attending these meetings were asked whether they supported the Board of Commissioners' consideration of a manufactured housing park ordinance and subdivision regulations. Of those attending, seventy-five percent supported consideration of subdivision regulations and eighty percent supported consideration of a manufactured housing park ordinance.

Meeting two. A second round of community meetings was held to gain residents' comments on draft future land use plan recommendations and the manufactured housing and subdivision regulations. These comments are incorporated into the final versions of the plan and the ordinances.

Main Planning Themes

The priority issues, concerns, and opportunities expressed at the community meetings resulted in the identification of four broad planning themes. These themes, described below, provide overall guidance for the development of the plan.

- **Economic development and jobs.** The community expressed concerns that the county's economic base is not growing sufficiently to provide good paying jobs to all who need them and that the county needs to be more competitive with other areas for jobs.
- **Farming and the rural landscape.** Residents place high value on agriculture. Farming remains a strong part of the county's economy and residents value the rural landscape and their rural lifestyles.
- **Safe and efficient transportation.** Residents recognize the importance a highway system that protects the safety of the motoring public, that provides efficient movement of traffic throughout the county, and that provides easy connections to the interstate system.
- **Quality residential communities.** Residents want homes that are free from the impacts of incompatible uses, that have basic infrastructure, and that have convenient services such as shopping.

Supporting these community values is a desire that the plan avoid any unnecessary constraints on individual and business decisions regarding the use and development of their property.

Future Vision for the Community

The Future Vision for Lenoir County is based on the values and concerns identified through the community participation process. The Vision is intended to provide an illustration of what the county wants to become in the future. It is not intended to describe what exists. The Vision also provides some basic land use and development principles that will guide the planning process.

"...Lenoir County is recognized in North Carolina's central coastal plain for its natural beauty and its quality of life. The county's scenic character is defined by its rural roads and lanes that run through its many productive farms and woodlands and that offer inspiring views of the Neuse River and its many tributaries. Its quality of life is defined by stable neighborhoods and communities, diverse opportunities to earn a living, supportive community organizations, a rural life-style, and freedom from unnecessarily restrictive regulations on decisions concerning use of the land.

The county offers a variety of choices in community settings for its residents—ranging from more urban-type residential areas located near its incorporated areas where services are available to the more rural development including lower density subdivisions and manufactured home parks located away from the city and towns. Homes on working farms are a major feature of the county's rural landscape.

Rural communities continue to be an important part of the county's development. These communities provide basic services—such as food, auto supplies, banks, and post offices—to the surrounding area; they offer unique residential opportunities; and many host schools that are a mainstay for the community.

The unincorporated areas of the county contain a variety of housing types to meet the needs of the county's families—all ages and income ranges. Yet, most residences are single-family. Manufactured homes are accepted as a quality, affordable housing option and they are encouraged to locate in high quality parks that provide all of the services required for a stable neighborhood.

Business land uses and industrial uses that provide services and jobs are located so that they are convenient to the county's residential communities but do not conflict with the residential environment.

The county continues to promote the Global Trans Park concept as a key means of providing good paying jobs for its residents. The county also supports economic development in other areas by identifying the best land for business and industry— considering a variety of factors such as surrounding land uses, transportation and utilities, and environmental conditions uses— and working with other agencies, state and local, and developers and property owners to ensure that it has the basic infrastructure in place to make it development ready.

Agriculture remains a major part of the county's economy, and the open spaces and vistas gained from working farms and managed woodlands contribute heavily to the county's quality of life.

Lenoir County continues to aggressively pursue with the NC Department of Transportation and the county's municipalities, the development of a high quality transportation system. The system includes major highway facilities that provide safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the county and 4-lane connections to the Interstate system. The state provides a high level of maintenance to existing roads and rights-of-way and quickly makes improvements to address safety problems. The cleanliness of the county's roadsides is a model for the region. The county encourages development patterns that enhance safety and protect the capacity of its existing roadway system.

Excellent county services support the quality of life offered by Lenoir County—

... The county is a safe place to live and work. Sheriff's Department insures that the county has a low crime rate and that residents are free from the fear of crime.

... State-of-the-art fire and emergency medical services are quickly available throughout the county.

... The public schools and community college are accessible and provide an excellent foundation for life-long learning.

... The water and sewer authority works with the county's water companies to insure that all residences and businesses are served with high quality water in sufficient quantities and pressures to meet community needs. In addition, areas where more intensive

development is expected are provided with central sewage collection and treatment services.

... Active and passive recreational opportunities abound for everyone—children, teens, adults, and seniors. Community and neighborhood parks and school-parks provide opportunities for an abundance of outdoor activities.

A responsive county government keeps the taxes and fees to support these services within the reach of all county residents.

Lenoir County values the opinions of its residents and property owners and involves them in decisions regarding the County and its future. The county and its municipalities cooperate to guide land use and development in the areas immediately surrounding the incorporated areas in a manner that is consistent with county goals and that protects the interests of property owners..."

Planning Goals

The Vision describes the type of community that Lenoir County is striving to create. The next question that must be asked is, "What are the most important things that we must do to get there?" The Goals described in this section provide the overall direction to achieve the County's Vision.

Economic development and job creation

- Increase the number of quality jobs and the county's revenue base.
- Encourage conservation of the county's environment and natural resources through resource-based commercial recreation.

Farming and rural landscape

- Encourage development patterns that conserve the rural character of the planning area.
- Encourage conservation of farming and the county's farmland.

Safe and efficient transportation

- Support development and maintenance of a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing.

- Encourage land use and development patterns that enhance the safety and protect the capacity of the highway system.

Quality residential communities

- Encourage the protection of residences and residential communities from unsuitable land uses and encourage the provision of safe, comfortable, and affordable housing for all families.
- Encourage locations for commercial and professional services that are convenient to the residents of the unincorporated areas of the county.

In addition to these specific planning goals, the plan's underlying aim is to preserve a regulatory environment in the unincorporated areas of the county that has minimal constraints on individual and business decisions, including the use of the land.

Section 2¾ Planning Base Information

The section provides the planning information required to develop strategies to attain the *Vision* and *Goals* defined in the plan. Information is provided on all of the key factors that affect the county’s future land use and development:

- Population and economic trends and forecasts
- Environmental resources
- Community infrastructure and facilities
- Existing land use

This information is combined in a *Summary of Land Development Potential*. Land development potential provides a foundation for the planning area’s future land use classifications.

Lenoir County Population and Economy

Population Growth Trends and Forecasts

Trends

The county’s total population was steady between 1980 and 2000. The population declined slightly from 59,819 in 1980 to 57,274 in 1990. By 2000, the county had regained its lost population. According to the Census, the county’s 2000 population is 59,648. The county’s population trends are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Lenoir County Future Land Use Plan
Population Growth Trends – 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	90-2000 Change
Lenoir County	59,819	57,274	59,648	2,374
Census Tracts	NA			
101		3,760	4,221	(461)
102		3,469	2,785	(684)
103		3,666	2,389	(1,277)
104		1,988	1,611	(377)
105		4,518	4,146	(372)
106		3,707	3,874	167

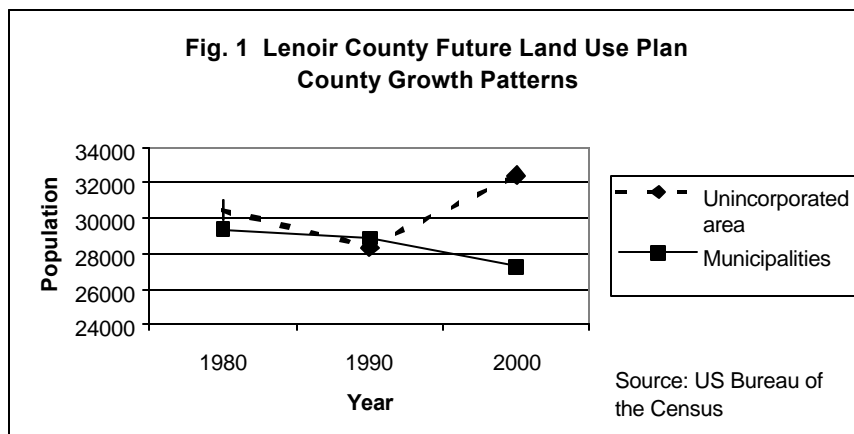
	1980	1990	2000	90-2000 Change
107		2,434	2,499	65
108		5,059	5,017	(42)
109		3,402	3,699	297
110		6,595	8,272	1,677
111		4,948	5,640	692
112		4,324	5,826	1,502
113		5,538	5,237	(301)
114		3,866	4,432	566
Unincorporated area	30,455	28,374	32,404	4,030
Municipalities	29,364	28,900	27,244	(1,656)

Source: US Bureau of the Census

(Shaded Census Tracts approximate the unincorporated area.)

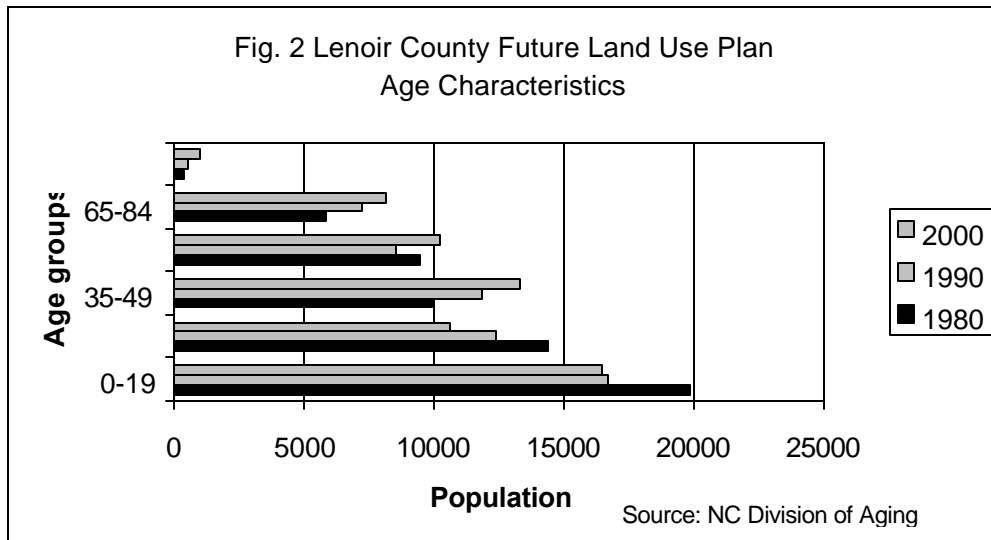
Table 1 also shows a significant shift in population patterns within the county between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, slightly more than 50 percent of the county's population was located within the incorporated areas of the municipalities. In 2000, approximately 54 percent of the county's population resided in the unincorporated area. This internal population shift is illustrated in Figure 1.

Within the planning area, the sub-areas located in the northwest and southwest are experiencing the most significant growth. The three Census Tracts located in these sub-areas ranked #1 through #3 in growth during the 1990's. The county's Inspections Department confirms these growth trends. These patterns are illustrated on Map 1.



Age characteristics

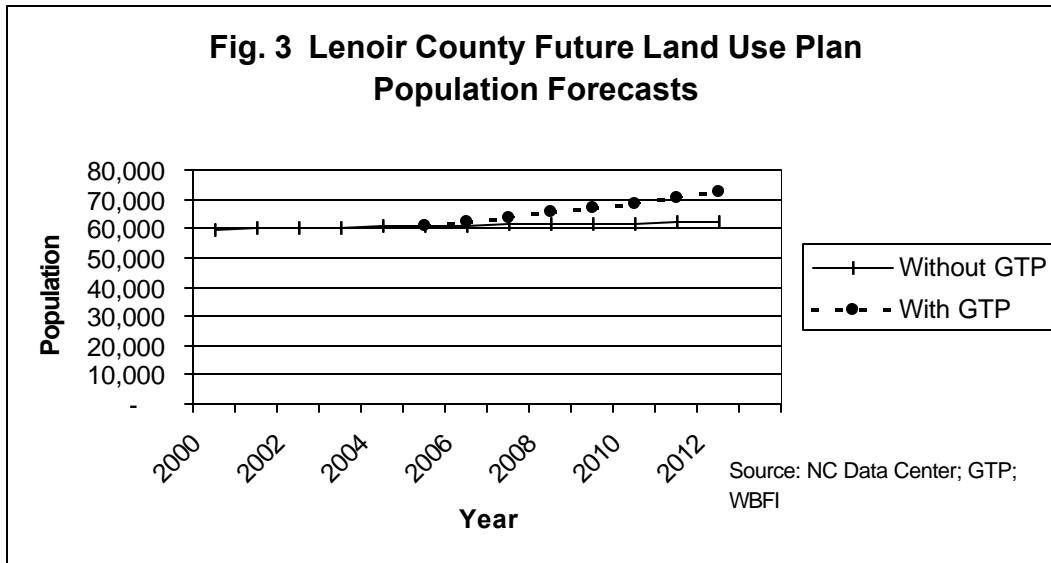
As expected, the county's population is getting older. Between 1980 and 2000 the fastest growing age groups in the county were those 35 years and older. As their number increases, residential communities and community services that address the needs of older adults will become more prevalent. These may include golf-oriented retirement communities, life care communities, and more diversity in retail and medical services and entertainment opportunities. Figure 2 shows the county's 1980-2000 age structure.



Population forecasts

As shown in Figure 3, the long-range population forecasts for Lenoir County are significantly impacted by the development success at the GTP. Without complete development of the GTP, the county's population is expected to increase from 59,648 in 2000 to 62,500 in 2012, an increase of 4 percent and similar to the 1990-2000 growth.

If the current development plans and schedule at the GTP hold, the county is expected to begin experiencing additional TransPark-related population growth by 2005, and the year 2012 population forecast for the county with the GTP is 72,700—an increase of nearly 22 percent for the 12-year period. Experience has shown that the workers attracted to the new jobs will be in the younger age groups. The younger population may increase the demand for a wider range of housing types, including new communities.



The shift in population patterns within the county from the incorporated areas to unincorporated areas is expected to continue during the forecast period (without significant annexation by the municipalities). Without the population impact of the GTP, the population forecast for the unincorporated area of the county in 2012 is approximately 36,300, or 58 percent of the total. This represents an increase of approximately 3,920 persons in the unincorporated area.

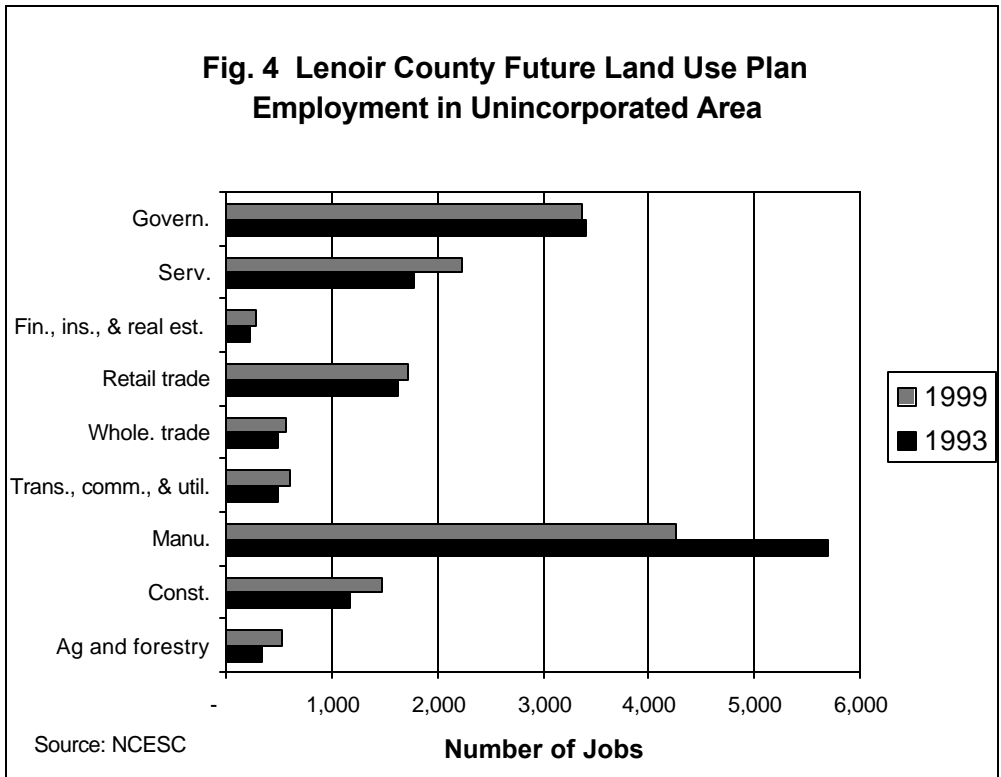
Employment

County-wide employment picture

According to estimates from the NC Employment Security Commission, total employment increased very slightly from 29,973 in 1993 to 30,395 in early 1999. (Estimates for the entire year 2000 are not available.) Within the individual industrial sectors, significant changes occurred during the decade. The number of manufacturing jobs declined from 8,763 in 1993 to 6,562 in 1999—a decrease of more than ¼. Within the manufacturing sector, chemical products (DuPont) and electronic/electrical equipment manufacturers are the dominant employers.

During the same period, jobs in services, retail trade, and wholesale trade increased. Most of the service sector jobs are in health care; most retail jobs are in restaurants and

food stores; and most wholesale trade jobs are in non-durable goods. Figure 4 illustrates the changes in countywide employment between 1993 and 1999.



Unincorporated area jobs

Table 2 contains estimates of the number of jobs in the unincorporated area of the county. These estimates show a slight decrease in jobs between 1993 and 1999. Following the countywide trend, the most significant changes are the decline in manufacturing employment and the increases in services and trade.

Table 2
Lenoir County Future Land Use Plan
Estimates of Employment in Planning Area^a

Sector	1993	1999
Agriculture and forestry	348	522
Construction	1,169	1,479
Manufacturing	5,696	4,265
Transportation,	488	612

Sector	1993	1999
communications, & utilities		
Wholesale trade	497	561
Retail trade	1,622	1,724
Finance, insurance, & real estate	226	283
Services	1,780	2,233
Government	3,413	3,370
Total	15,239	15,049

Source: NCESC; WBFJ

^a Published data on jobs in the unincorporated area of counties is not available. These estimates are based on gross retail sales, analysis of land uses, and 1990 Census data on place of work.

Agriculture

Agriculture remains an important sector of the county's economy. Even though the number of farm operations declined in the 1990's, total employment in agriculture increased between 1993 and 1999. According to the Census of Agriculture, the number of farms declined from 667 in 1987 to 447 in 1997 and the number of full time farm operators declined from 455 to 303 during the same period. While the number of farms and farm operators declined, the average size of farms increased from 219 acres in 1987 to 335 acres in 1997.

Between 1993 and 1999, the number of persons employed either in farming (including livestock) or a service related to farming increased from 387 to 580. Between 1993 and 1999, the total cropland harvested in the county increased from approximately 80,400 acres to 95,000. Complete recent figures on the economic impact of farming in Lenoir County are not available, but in 1998 total wages generated in agriculture were \$2.1 million and total cash receipts from crops and livestock in the county totaled an estimated \$136.4 million. For perspective, in 1998 the county's total farm cash receipts ranked 13th in the state behind Wayne, Johnston, and Pitt Counties in the central coastal district.¹

¹ NC Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics Division.

Population and Economy Summary

1. The county's total population grew from 57,274 in 1990 to 59,648 in 2000, recouping its population loss from 1980 to 1990. The population increase of 4.1% for the decade is among the lower growth rates for NC counties.

The areas in the northwestern and southwestern sectors of the county are growing fastest.

2. From 1990-2000, there was a significant shift of population between the municipalities and the planning area. In 1990, a majority of the county's population lived in an incorporated area; in 2000, 54% lived in the unincorporated area.
3. Like most of the nation, the county's population is aging. The fastest growing age groups are those 35 years and older. These shifts will impact service needs and development patterns. Retirement communities and life care communities will be more widespread.
4. The GTP could have a major impact on the county's population growth. Without development of the GTP, the population is expected to increase to 62,500 by 2012. With the GTP development, the 2012 population forecast could reach nearly 73,000. The population increase generated by the GTP may increase the demand for a wider range of housing types, including new planned communities.

It is also expected that the planning area's share of total population will increase to 58% during the coming 10 years.

5. Overall the number of jobs in the county increased slightly from 30,000 in 1993 to 30,400 in 1999. However, significant changes occurred in the individual sectors. Manufacturing jobs, with traditionally higher pay, declined by $\frac{1}{4}$ to 6,562. Jobs in the service and retail sectors increased. Most service jobs are in health care and most retail jobs are in restaurants. These shifts in the types of jobs available in the county can have significant impacts on worker incomes.
6. Current data on jobs below the county level are not published, but estimates place the number of jobs in the planning area at approximately 15,000 in 1999.

7. Agriculture remains an important sector of the county's economy. Due to economic trends and farming technology, the number of farms, the number of farm operators, and the number of people employed in agriculture are declining. However in 1998, total cash receipts from crops and livestock were an estimated \$136.4 million. The county ranks 13th in the state in total farm cash receipts and 4th among the 12 counties of the central coastal district.

Lenoir County Environmental Resources

The county’s environmental features affect land use and development in at least three ways. First, they may make it difficult to develop land in particular locations for some uses. For example, lands may be wet and difficult to drain; they may present problems for building foundations; soils in a particular location may not be suited for septic tanks; or the location may be subject to flooding and present a hazard to life and property. Second, some land uses and development may conflict with current productive uses of the land that have high value to the county. For example, some of the lands that are best suited for agriculture and are presently being farmed may also have characteristics that make them well suited for development. And third, the feature may be regulated at the county, state, or federal levels. Examples of these resources are floodplains and wetlands.

The inventory of the county’s environmental resources includes four components:

- Identification of hydric soils that may indicate the presence of regulated wetlands
- Identification of areas with limitations for septic tanks
- Identification of areas with flood hazards
- Identification of the best agricultural soils

The county’s soil survey is used to identify hydric soils, septic tank limitations, and the best agricultural land. Mapping from the Federal Emergency Management Administration is used to identify flood hazard areas. Table 3 lays out the soil interpretations used in the inventory.

Table 3
Lenoir County Future Land Use Plan
Soils Analysis

Soil Map Unit Name	Symbol	Hydric soil	Septic tank limitation	Agricultural productivity rating^a
Bibb	BB	yes	Severe	L
Blanton	Bn	no	Slight	L
Chewacla	Ch	no	Severe	L
Coxville	Co	yes	Severe	M
Craven	Cr, Cv	no	Severe	M
Goldsboro	Go	no	Severe	H

Soil Map Unit Name	Symbol	Hydric soil	Septic tank limitation	Agricultural productivity rating ^a
Grifton	Gr	yes	Severe	M
Johns	Jo	no	Severe	H
Johnston	Js	yes	Severe	L
Kalmia	Ka, Kb	no	Slight	H
Kenansville	Ke	no	Slight	L
Kinston	Kn	yes	Severe	L
Lakeland	La	no	Slight	L
Leaf	Le	yes	Severe	L
Lenoir	Ln	no	Severe	M
Leon	Lo	yes	Severe	L
Lumbee	Lu	yes	Severe	M
Lynchburg	Ly	no	Severe	H
Meggett	Me	yes	Severe	L
Murville	Mu	yes	Severe	L
Norfolk	Na, Nb, Nc	no	Slight to moderate	H
Pactolus	Pa	no	Severe	L
Pamlico	Pc	yes	Severe	M
Pantego	Pe	yes	Severe	M
Pocalla	Po	no	Slight	L
Portsmouth	Pr	yes	Severe	M
Rains	Ra	yes	Severe	M
Stallings	St	no	Severe	M
Torhunta	To	yes	Severe	M
Umbric ochraqualfs	Uo	yes	Severe	L
Wagram	Wb, Wc, Wd	no	Slight to moderate	L
Wickham	Wk	no	Slight	H
Woodington	Wn	yes	Severe	M

^a L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High

Source: USDA Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Lenoir County*

Hydric soils

Table 3 shows the county's *hydric* soils as identified by the US Soil Conservation Service. The presence of these soils is an indicator of the possible presence of wetlands that are subject to state or federal regulations. The US Army Corps of Engineers defines wetlands as *those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a*

frequency and duration to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Many of the county's hydric soils can be developed. However, the owner or developer must proceed with caution, because if wetlands are present, they may be regulated by state or federal agencies. Ditching, draining, or pumping of wetlands may require a state permit and, in some instances, a federal permit.

The county's hydric soils, which indicate the possible presence of wetlands, are shown on Map 2. Approximately 78,000 acres of the undeveloped land in the planning area have hydric soils—approximately 1/3 of the total undeveloped acres. Approximately 3,000 land parcels are impacted by hydric soils (have their center in an area where soils are identified as hydric).

Septic tank limitations

Soils with septic tank limitations in the unincorporated area of the county are shown on Map 3. The septic tank limitations of these soils result primarily from three conditions: high water table, periodic flooding, and/or permeability problems. While it is not detailed enough to predict septic tank limitations with a high degree of accuracy, the soil survey does show locations where development with septic tanks should proceed with caution. An on-site investigation is required to confirm any septic tank limitations.

Approximately 140,000 acres of the undeveloped land in the planning area have soils with severe septic tank limitation, which is nearly 60% of the undeveloped acres. In addition, there are nearly 6,000 land parcels that are impacted by soils with severe septic limitations.

Flood hazard areas

Map 4 shows areas in the county that are within the 100-year flood hazard area. The areas within the 100-year flood area have a 1% chance of being flooded in any given year and present a special natural hazard to people who live in the area and improvements that are built in the area.

Lenoir County manages its flood hazard areas through the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (adopted 1992 and amended 1999). In general, the ordinance requires that the

lowest floor of new construction within the flood hazard area (100-year and 500-year floodways) to be elevated 1-foot above the established flood elevation and that an engineer certify that any fill within these areas will not result in an increase of the flood level during the base flood.

Approximately 34,000 acres of undeveloped land in the planning area are located in the 100-year flood plain—about 14% of the total. The area within the 500-year flood area, where flood risk is lower totals approximately 13,000 acres. The 100-year flood area includes approximately 1,100 land parcels (parcels that have their centers within a 100-year flood hazard area).

Agricultural productivity

The agricultural productivity ratings – low, moderate, and high – shown in Table 3 are based on the expected yields for the following crops for each of the soil series mapped in the county’s soil survey: corn, cotton, soybeans, wheat, tobacco, and sweet potatoes. The yields for corn, cotton, soybeans, and wheat are taken from a table devised by Dr. Steve Hodges of NCSU based on what a “better farmer” would average 3 out of every 5 years.

While “good” agricultural soils are located throughout the county, large areas of “better” and “best” soils are located south of the Neuse in Southwest and Woodington Townships and in the northeastern area in Vance and Contentnea Neck Townships. Significant areas of “best” and “better” soils are also located along US 70 and NC 903 near LaGrange.

Approximately 154,000 acres are identified as “better” and “best” soils according to agricultural productivity. These areas are shown on Map 5.

Lenoir County Community Infrastructure and Facilities

The inventory and analysis of the county’s community infrastructure and facilities includes four areas that serve the county’s residents and that shape the local economy and land development enterprises: water services and facilities; wastewater collection facilities; planned highway improvements; and recreation and leisure facilities. In addition to providing essential services to the county’s residents, these services and facilities have a major influence on decisions regarding the type and location of land development activities.

ater services and facilities

Lenoir County and its four municipalities are served by five water systems: Deep Run Water Corporation, North Lenoir Water Corporation, City of Kinston, Town of LaGrange, and Town of Pink Hill. These five water utilities have a combined average daily demand of approximately 8.4 million gallons per day (mgd). All five obtain all of their water from wells drilled into the Cretaceous aquifer system. While the quality of the water from this aquifer system is excellent, water levels have been dropping for decades due to overuse, and the state may limit additional uses of the aquifer. As a result, the county cannot rely on ground water to meet its future needs

The Water Master Plan recommends surface water to meet future needs. The plan includes a raw water intake and 15 mgd treatment plant on the Neuse River at Pot Neck near Kennedy Home. The plan calls for transport of treated water to the county's five suppliers through strategically located transmission lines. The treatment plant will meet the county's needs to the year 2025.

Location of the raw water intake on the Neuse will require designation of a ½-mile critical area around the intake and the designation of a watershed protection area (WS IV) in the area above the intake. The watershed protection area encompasses approximately 25,000 acres. For new development in the watershed, the WS-IV designation sets a maximum residential density of 3 dwelling units per acre and a maximum of 36% built-upon area in subdivisions without curb and gutter. Lower densities and built-upon area restrictions apply in subdivisions with curb and gutter streets. The watershed protection areas are illustrated on Map 6.

With the exception of the southeastern area of the county between US 258 and NC 58 with very low density uses, water service in the unincorporated area of the county is extensive (see Map 6). The types of lines available and their lengths are shown below:

Transmission lines (10 – 16")	28 miles
Distribution lines (4 – 8")	170 miles
Distribution/Service lines (2 – 3")	8 miles

Sewer

The county's three municipalities and the Town of Grifton provide sewer services in the planning area. Available sewer lines are concentrated in the areas surrounding the municipalities. The types and lengths of gravity sewer lines, which are easiest to access, are shown below:

Collectors	41,000 feet
Interceptors	11,700 feet
Outfalls	700 feet

There are approximately 5,200 land parcels totaling 51,000 acres (average 9.8 acres/parcel) located within ½ mile of a sewer line. These areas are shown on Map 7.

The Lenoir County Water and Sewer Authority has received a grant for preparation of a county-wide Sewer Master Plan. Work on the master plan should begin in the near future.

Transportation improvements

The county's adopted thoroughfare plan is shown on Map 8. The plan includes four major types of highway facilities: principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors, and minor collectors. The purpose of each of these classifications is outlined below.

Major arterials—The primary function of these roads is to move traffic between major urban centers within the county and nearby areas. Planned access is only at intersections with public roads or at major driveways that serve a concentration of traffic generators, such as a shopping center.

Minor arterials—These roads are also intended to move traffic as their primary function. However, they are also intended to provide access to property. The priority for access is similar to the major arterial, but driveway access for lower intensity uses can be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

Major collectors—These roads serve the dual function of moving traffic and providing access to property. Access to major collectors can be either at road intersections or at properly deigned driveways.

Minor collectors—Similar to major collectors, these roads are expected to move traffic but to have frequent driveway access points.

Improvements are required on many of the arterials and major collectors identified on the Thoroughfare Plan in order for the roads to meet their intended purpose. The NCDOT's Transportation Improvement Program is the program that allocates funding for road improvements.

The roads in the planning area that are either scheduled on DOT's **Transportation Improvement Program** or are identified as a TIP project but are not funded in the current program are shown in Table 4 and illustrated in Map 8.

Table 4
Lenoir County Future Land Use Plan
Major Highway Improvement Plans

Project	Description	Status
Crescent Road Connector	Multi-lanes between US 70 and NC 58 on new location	Part under construction; final phase construction beginning in FY 04
NC 11 widening	Widen NC 11 to 4 lanes from Jackson Crossroads to Pink Hill with by-pass at Deep Run	Part underway; final phase construction scheduled to begin 2003
US 70 – Kinston By-pass	Construct freeway by-pass on new location	Right-of-way acquisition to begin 2008; construction in post years
US 258 widening (north)	Widen US 258 to 4 lanes from Kinston to Wilson with a by-pass at Snow Hill	Project estimates prepared; unfunded
US 258 widening (south)	Widen US 258 from Onslow County to US 70 at Kinston	Project estimates prepared; unfunded
NC 58 Freeway	Construct NC 58 freeway from Kinston to Wilson on new location	Unfunded

Source: NCDOT, Transportation Improvement Program, 2002-2008

The Crescent Road connector is identified by the county’s economic development board and the Global TransPark as an essential facility for economic development because enhances the county’s 4-lane access to the Interstate system. Currently, alternative alignments are being considered for Crescent Rd. One group of alternatives intersect with US 70 just west of the US 258 intersection. The other alternative travels in a more westerly direction and intersects US 70 at Little Baltimore, just south of LaGrange. The widening of NC 11 to four lanes will provide improved access from the county to I-40 and the state port at Wilmington.

The residents attending community meetings placed priority on all of the planned improvements.

Recreation facilities

As shown on Map 9, the county has a range of recreation facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities.

- *District parks*—There are three has three district parks located in the unincorporated area that are part of a school-park cooperative agreement with the city-county parks department. These parks include the Moss Hill Elementary School (8 acres), the Southwood Elementary School (25 acres), and the Savannah Middle School (21 acres). These parks provide playgrounds, gymnasiums, and athletic fields to serve the residents of the surrounding communities.
- *Bike trails*—The county has an extensive “share the road” bike trail system that includes a 59-mile “main loop” around the county with “spoke” loops that provide connections to the municipalities and other service centers.
- *Paddling*^{3/4}The Neuse River is recognized as an outstanding water trail through Lenoir County. Three segments are included in the *A Paddler’s Guide to Eastern North Carolina*:
 - Segment 1 Route 1152 bridge to wildlife access area at US 70 (12.8 miles)—Good water quality and good to excellent scenery.
 - Segment 2 Wildlife access at US 70 to NC 55 bridge (11.5 miles)—Good water quality and fair scenery.
 - Segment 3 NC 55 bridge to Contentnea Creek (9 miles)—Good water quality and excellent scenery.

The Parks and Recreation department is upgrading access points on the Neuse for canoes and kayaks. These facilities are located at the NC 1152 bridge, the CSS Neuse site, the Nature Center, and the NC 55 bridge.

In addition to the paddling opportunities on the Neuse, Tull's Mill Pond and Kelly's Mill Pond connected by Southwest Creek are a resource for development of additional water trails in the county.² Kelly's Millpond and the area to the east into Jones County is included in the Wyse Fork Battlefield. According to the National Park Service, the battle at Wyse Fork came late in the Civil War, March 7-10, 1865. Union forces under General Schofield defeated Confederate Forces under General Bragg and as a result Kinston fell.³

- *Scenic By-way*—A portion of the state Scenic By-way, Sherman's Run, passes through the county from the Jones County line on US 258 to the Wayne County line near Seven Springs.
- *Mountains-To-Sea Trail*—This trail is planned to connect from Clingman's Dome in Cherokee County to Jockey's Ridge State Park in Dare County. It is routed through Lenoir County following roughly the southern portion of the Bicycle Loop Trail. Discussions with state trails officials indicate a long-term objective of locating portions of the trail in the Neuse floodplain through the county if opportunities become available.
- *Flood Buyout Properties*^{3/4}As a result of flooding during Hurricanes Fran and Floyd, the county has received funding and is in the process of purchasing properties located in flood hazard areas that are eligible for the "buyout" program. There are approximately 800 properties involved totaling more than 500 acres. These properties represent a major open space and recreation resource for the county. They will provide an opportunity to develop additional water access and potentially creation of linear parks along the Neuse River. The properties included in the program are shown on Map 10.

² Water trails offer a unique economic development opportunity for Lenoir County. According to a survey by the US Department of Commerce, nearly 160,000 adults participated in canoeing or kayaking in coastal North Carolina in 1999. Related businesses opportunities include canoe/kayak rentals, outfitters, liveries, restaurants, and accommodations.

³ www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/battles

Existing Land Use

Map 11 shows existing land use patterns in the planning area. The overall land use pattern for the county is clearly rural with working farms and supporting residential, commercial, institutional, and business uses. However, there are differences in the intensity of development between the areas north of the Neuse and those south of the Neuse. The north area tends to be more intensely developed, particularly in the area west of the Global TransPark. Generally, the landscape in the southern area tends to have a more rural character, with the exception of the commercial corridor between Kinston and Jacksons Crossroads.

- **Northwest area.** The area between US 70, US 258, and NC 903 has a moderate level of development with a mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, and community uses. The residential uses range from higher density developments with lots less than ½ acre near Kinston to very low density rural residential uses with large lots . White Consolidated Industries and Cooper Industries are the largest industrial land uses in this area. Commercial uses are dispersed along the US 70 corridor with a cluster located at the US 70/SR 1327 intersection. Commercial uses in this area include convenience businesses, heavy commercial operations, storage, and highway oriented uses.
- **Northeast area.** This area is generally bounded by US 58 and the Global TransPark on the west, Neuse River on the south and Contentnea Creek. Development clusters occur at Graingers, near Savannah School, Hugo, and at Tick Bite, and much of the road frontage in this area is developed for residential uses – primarily large-lot rural residential. However, farming remains the predominant use in the area.

The business uses located in the Graingers area are heavy commercial or highway oriented uses. There are convenience and medical service uses located in the Tick Bite area. Many of the crossroads communities in this area have grocery stores.

Major agri-business uses are located near Hugo. The Dupont plant site, which includes more than 600 acres, is located south of NC 11 approximately 5 miles from Kinston.

- **Southwest area.** This area is bounded by the Neuse River and US 258. NC 11 , between Kinston and Pink Hill divides the area.

With the exception of the highway commercial corridor between Kinston and Jacksons Crossroads on NC 11/55 and Deep Run, the uses in this area are primarily rural residential with large lots and either conventional or manufactured homes.

Deep Run is a classic unincorporated town with commercial, business, and community uses serving the surrounding residential community.

The NC 11/55 corridor contains a mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, and community uses. Some of the commercial uses are of the heavy commercial type that may have unsightly operations. Many of the structures in the area are old and suffer from deferred maintenance and the sites may not be developed to present day standards with improved parking areas and safe and easy ingress and egress.

A large cluster of residential uses – conventional and manufactured – is located on the eastern side of NC 11/55 at Tyree Rd.

- **Southeastern area.** The predominant land uses in this area are farming, rural commercial, such as grocery stores, and rural residential uses. Three crossroads communities are located at Loftin’s Crossroads, the intersection of Cobb Rd. and Silo Rd., and the intersection of NC 58 and Vine Knot Rd. Loftin’s Crossroads and NC 58/Vine Knot have convenience grocery stores.

Building permit trends

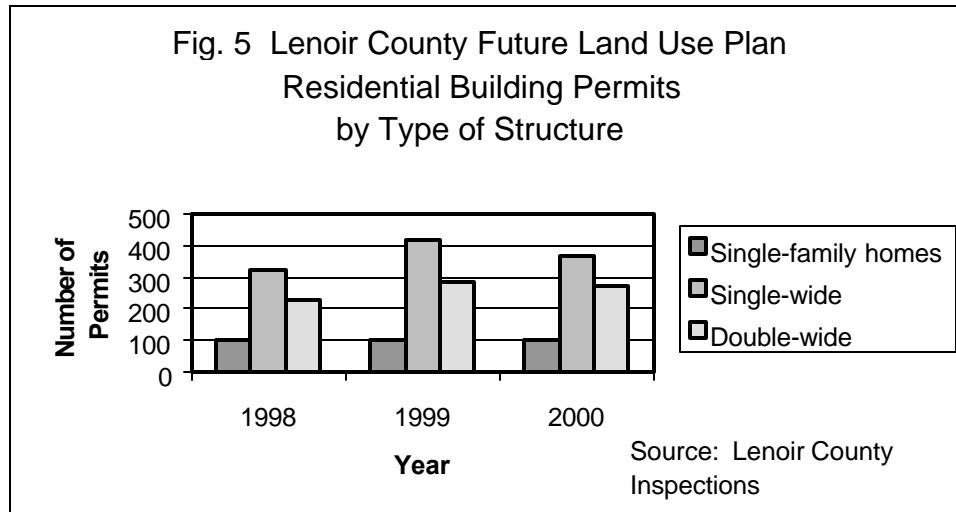
Table 5 shows recent county trends in residential building permits for the unincorporated areas. For 1998 – 2000, the county averaged 733 residential permits per year. Of the total, approximately 100 permits each year are for conventional single-family homes. The remainder, more than 85 percent, are for single-wide and double-wide manufactured homes. Figure 5 illustrates the permit trend.

Table 5
Lenoir County Future Land Use Plan
Building Permit Trends

Residential Permits	1998	1999	2000
Single-family homes	103	99	103
Manufactured homes			
Single-wide	327	417	369
Double-wide	228	284	271

Residential Permits	1998	1999	2000
Total	658	800	743

Source: Lenoir County Inspections

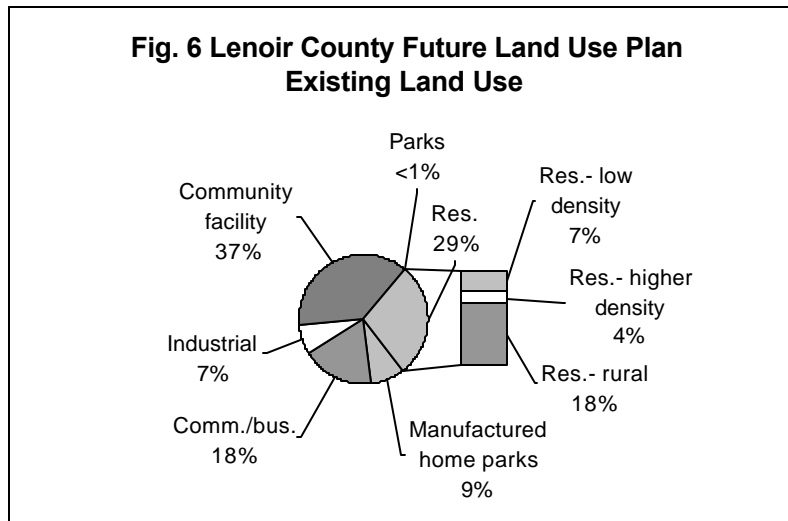


In 1990, the unincorporated area had approximately 11,434 total housing units and 3,270 – 28 percent – were manufactured homes. The number of manufactured homes currently locating in the unincorporated area of the county will significantly change these housing development patterns.

Analysis of uses

As shown in Figure 6 chart below, community facilities, such as schools and churches, utilize the largest share of the developed land in the planning area – 37%. However, the next largest category is residential, including all densities, which uses 29% of the developed land. Within the residential category, rural residential uses on large lots use 18%. Only 4% of the developed land is devoted to higher density residential uses. Manufactured home parks are shown as a separate residential category, and they make up 9% of total developed land.

Approximately 18% of the developed land is used by commercial and business uses. According to tax records, there are nearly 500 business uses in the planning area and the average site size is approximately 11 acres. Industrial uses comprise only 7% of the total developed land. There are approximately 90 industrial uses in the planning area and the average site size is 18 acres.



Agricultural and Forestry Uses

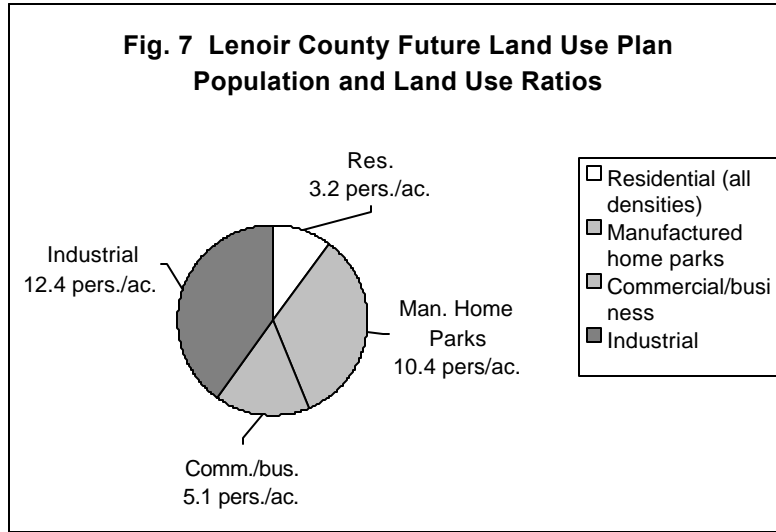
Map 11A, based on satellite images available from the NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (CGIA), provides a generalized illustration of the patterns of agricultural and forestry land uses in the county. This map identifies approximately 107,000 acres of land under some type of cultivation and 105,000 in a woodland classification. Some of the areas classified as woodland are bottomlands and river swamps that are not managed and may not have commercial potential. In addition, there are areas that are classified as unmanaged shrublands that may have been cut-over or formerly used for agriculture. These estimates are essentially consistent with the estimates from the NC Division of Forestry and the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

Estimates of Undeveloped Land

There are a total of 263,000 acres of land in the planning area. Based on the land use analysis, there are approximately 21,000 acres of land in the planning area developed for community uses—residential, commercial, industrial, and so on. This leaves an estimated 242,000 acres that may be developed in the future. As noted above, an

estimated 212,000 acres, or nearly 90% of the undeveloped area, is in agriculture or woodlands.

Figure 7 shows the ratio of population and land uses in the planning area and is useful for estimating future land needs. The ratios shown in the chart are similar to those experienced in other rural areas.



Summary^{3/4}

Land Development Potential

Map 12 provides a summary of the land development potential in the planning area. Land development potential is determined by a combination of factors identified in the planning base information that impact the development of land. These factors include: population growth trends as an indicator of the real estate market, environmental limitations, location factors, and the presence of planned development of key community facilities – particularly highways and sewers. The map includes five categories of land:

Higher development potential—Land in this category has a high potential for development for a range of higher intensity community uses – residential, commercial, and industrial – due an absence of severe environmental limitations, the presence or planned development of essential community facilities, and/or the growth trends in the area.

Moderate development potential—Land in this category also has a high potential for development because they have minimal environmental limitations and have experienced a higher level of growth than most other areas of the county. However, they are not expected to receive a full range of community services during the planning period and as a result have a development potential for lower intensity rural and suburban uses – low density residential, supporting commercial uses such as convenience stores and banks, and some categories of employment uses.

Lower development potential^{3/4} Land in this category is similar to the land in the *moderate* category. However, they are among the lower growth areas in the planning area.

Rural development areas^{3/4} Land in this category has environmental limitations, with severe septic tank limitations being the most important, and is not expected to receive community facilities within the planning period. These areas are also experiencing lower growth rates. The land will continue as a resource for scattered-site/large-lot housing, convenience commercial uses, and farming and farm-related uses.

Conservation areas^{3/4} Land in this category includes the areas within the 100-year flood plain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Administration. While uses are permitted in these areas, there are strict development requirements and care must be taken to avoid hazards to life and property.

Section 3¾ Growth and Development Plan

Future Land Use

The desired future development pattern in the planning area is based on four major land classifications. These land classifications are designed to represent those areas where existing farm and rural type development will continue; where a transition from rural uses to more intensive urban and suburban land uses will occur; and where, due to the sensitivity of natural resources or development hazards, development must proceed with caution. The plan's land classifications, which are described in detail below, are as follows:

—**Community growth areas**

- Regional highway nodes
- Commercial corridors
- Primary enterprise areas

—**Rural transition areas**

- Village center
- Crossroad centers
- Secondary enterprise areas

¾**Agriculture and rural housing areas**

¾**Conservation areas**

These classifications are shown on Map 13. This map is intended to illustrate the application of the land classifications only. It is not intended to include recommendations for any specific site or parcel of land.

Land Classification Plan

Community growth areas

The purpose of the **community growth area** classification is to designate areas for the planning area's most intensive future development. It will include residences – both single-family and multifamily structures – businesses and offices, industrial facilities, and supporting community uses on lands that are suited for this level of development and that are expected to receive basic public services during the planning period. Basic public

services in this classification include water, sewer, and the development or upgrade of the transportation network so that it handles anticipated traffic safely and efficiently and provides connections regional and interstate facilities.

Residential uses

- Established residential neighborhoods should be protected as a valuable housing resource for the community and a key part of the image that the community portrays to businesses making location decisions. Unwanted traffic and incompatible non-residential uses will lower the livability of these neighborhoods and may affect their continued viability.
- Traditional and modular single-family homes will be encouraged as a major housing resource. However, manufactured homes are recognized as an affordable source of housing for many families. Homes in new residential subdivisions and in manufactured home parks will be safe from natural hazards and have basic improvements to provide for a safe, healthy, and attractive neighborhood. These improvements include roads to DOT standards, adequate emergency access, proper stormwater drainage, and wastewater treatment.
- Mixed-use developments and residential developments with a range of densities are appropriate in this area. The preferred locations for higher density residential uses have easy access to employment and retail centers, access to major and minor thoroughfares, and availability of adequate public services. Proposals for higher density development should consider maintaining a balance with surrounding uses, particularly established residential neighborhoods.

Commercial and office uses

- **Regional commercial centers**
 - ... Regional commercial centers are designated at planned intersections located at Highway 70 By-pass/Highway 70/Crescent Rd. and Highway 70 By-pass/NC 11/NC 55 and near Graingers on NC 11 east of Kinston. These are high traffic and high visibility locations that are suited for intensive development for a wide range of retail and service activities. Retail and service activities located in these centers will generate high volumes of traffic, will require regional exposure, and will serve a regional market. “Big box” retail activities with expansive sites and large parking requirements are examples of the types of intensive uses suited for these sites.

- **Highway commercial corridors**
 - ... Highway commercial corridors are located along the three major “arrival areas” for the community – along US 70 between the proposed Crescent Rd. intersection and the Kinston urban area, NC 11 between Jackson’s Crossroads and US 70, and NC 11 between the Kinston urban area and Graingers. These areas are well suited for a mixture of commercial and business uses that typically require high visibility and good road access, or which cater to passing motorists.
 - ... Businesses locating in these areas should be encouraged to avoid the negative aspects of “strip development” by providing adequate setbacks, clearly developed but limited driveway accesses, adequate parking, appropriate signage, appropriate lighting, and buffering less intensive adjoining uses, particularly residential uses.
 - ... Close attention should be paid to appearance in these commercial corridors. These corridors often provide visitors with their first impression of the community. Commercial activities with unsightly outdoor operations or storage are discouraged from location in these areas.

Primary enterprise areas

Enterprise areas are designed to accommodate the county’s prime industrial locations. They are located in the higher growth areas on land that has few environmental limitations and will allow a range of industrial land uses to take advantage of the most important location factors for these types of businesses: (1) availability of development-ready sites with water and sewer readily accessible; (2) availability of affordable electric and gas; and (3) easy access to the Interstate system, particularly I-95. Once a decision on the location of the Crescent Road project, including its intersection with US 70 is made, it will be possible to develop more definitive plans for the enterprise area in the northwestern area of the county. Environmental quality considerations will be satisfied by the state’s permitting systems for water quality, air quality, and land quality.

- ... Availability of water and sewer are key prerequisites for location of major job-producing land uses. The water and sewer authority will give priority attention to extending sewer facilities to the corridor and ensuring that water services are adequate in terms of quantity and pressure.
- ... Local interests will combine efforts to push for the completion of planned transportation facilities, including Crescent Road and the US 70 By-pass.
- ... Where industrial-type uses are located in close proximity to existing built-up areas, they should be encouraged to consider buffers to enhance their compatibility with surrounding areas.

Rural transition areas

The purpose of the **rural transition area** classification is to designate areas for lower intensity development in areas where farming will remain an important element of the landscape. The land in this area generally has few limitations for development. Typical development will include lower density residential subdivisions, manufactured home parks, clusters of homes on large lots, and supporting convenience-type commercial uses. Self-contained development, such as golf course retirement communities, is a desirable use in these areas. Low intensity industrial and job generating uses are compatible with the purposes of the classification.

The rural transition area will have some public services but is not expected to see extensive development of sewer.

More intensive business uses are encouraged to locate at major intersections the transition areas. These intersection locations are convenient to area residents and will assist the county in enhancing the safety and protecting the capacity of its highway system.

Residential uses

Residential subdivisions for conventional, modular, and manufactured homes and manufactured home parks will have the basic infrastructure required for a safe and healthy neighborhoods. Septic tanks will be the primary means of wastewater treatment. However, roads will be built to DOT standards, adequate emergency response will be ensured, and “best management practices” will be used to handle drainage.

Village center

Village centers are located at Deep Run and the Graingers area on NC 11. These centers are intended to provide a mixture of residences and a range of convenience services to the residents of the surrounding area. These services include food stores, personal services, auto services, post office, banks, and community uses such as schools and churches. The *village center* will continue to attract residential, commercial, and community uses.

Crossroad centers

The intersections of existing and proposed *minor collector streets* with higher level streets, such as *major collectors* and *arterials*, are designated as *crossroad centers*. These centers are designed for convenience retail and auto service uses and other

generally accepted rural businesses. Additional commercial development is encouraged to locate at these primary intersections.

Secondary enterprise corridor

The corridor along NC 11 between Deep Run and the Pink Hill area is designated as a *secondary enterprise corridor*. Upgrade of NC 11 is underway and will eventually offer 4-lane access to I-40 and the state port at Wilmington. In addition, discussions are underway to secure the extension of sewer services from Pink Hill to Deep Run. With the completion of these improvements, the NC 11 corridor will have most of the location requirements for industrial uses. The dominant development patterns in this corridor will continue to be farming and related residential uses. However, industrial, business, storage and distribution, and convenience retail uses are appropriate for the area.

If services become available in the NC 11 corridor between Jackson's Crossroads and Deep Run, designation of an additional *secondary enterprise corridor* may be considered.

To encourage development of this corridor, the water and sewer authority should secure extension of sewer services and local interests should continue to monitor the state's Transportation Improvement Program to ensure that the NC 11 improvements are completed.

Agriculture and rural housing

This purpose of the **agriculture and rural housing** classification is to encourage conservation of the planning area's agricultural operations and low density residential uses. Except for community water, the area is not expected to have public services during the planning period. Land in these areas contains some of the planning area's best agricultural soils. The soils also have limitations for septic tanks, and without community sewer, they are best suited for low intensity uses.

Crossroad centers are also identified in this area. These centers, located at major intersections, will have convenience retail services and other generally accepted rural businesses.

Conservation areas

These areas include land located within the 100-year flood plain as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Administration. While development may take place in these areas, the preferred uses are low intensity activities such as recreation and open

space and farming. If development does occur, care must be taken to minimize risk to life and property from flood hazards. The county's flood damage prevention ordinance provides basic requirements to meet this objective.

Parks and open space are excellent uses for the 100-year flood plain areas in the county. They provide opportunities for active and passive recreation activities and they provide an opportunity to secure access to the Neuse River and the creeks in the planning area. Securing water access and the creation of water trails will allow the county to provide canoe and kayak experiences for residents and visitors alike. Paddling is the nation's fastest growing water sport with significant related business opportunities.

Potential wetlands are not included on the Future Land Use Map. However, property owners and subdividers are encouraged to use flexible land planning techniques to preserve these land features while securing their own development objectives.

Future Development

This section describes the strategies that are intended to help the county achieve its land use and development goals and to implement the recommendations for future land use. The strategies are divided into two groups. The short-term strategies should receive priority consideration by the county. These strategies can enhance the quality of development in the planning area and support on-going economic development programs. In addition, these strategies either can be implemented with existing staff or resources have been identified already for implementation.

The longer-term strategies include programs that the county may consider in the future. While these strategies may not have major staffing implications, they will require some grant assistance and/or detailed planning for successful implementation.

Short-term strategies

1. Community development regulations

Initial drafts of subdivision regulations and manufactured housing park regulations, which are similar ordinances for guiding land development, were prepared in concert with the land use plan. The county should give priority consideration to implementation of these regulations. They are community development tools that will allow the county to encourage orderly development patterns and help ensure that larger developments have well designed basic infrastructure that is required for public

health and safety, emergency services, and protection of property values. Some of the specific benefits of these ordinances are outlined below:

- Help ensure an efficient county road system by coordinating the arrangement of new roads with existing roads and highways, including the protection of rights-of-way for new and expanded facilities;
- Help ensure that roads meet minimum DOT construction standards, and that where appropriate they are eligible to be accepted by the DOT for maintenance;
- Help assure residents that they will receive prompt response from the county's emergency service providers;
- Help ensure residents that health standards for water and wastewater treatment will be maintained; and
- Help protect residents and property from flooding; and

2. Infrastructure development

Water, sewer, and roads are the basic infrastructure that will guide county land use and development and that is the key ingredient in a successful economic development program. The future land use patterns shown in the plan are dependent to a large extent on the placement of water, sewer, and roads. To be ideally suited for economic development and to be competitive with other areas, industrial and business site must be served with water and sewer and have easy access to the regional highway system.

- **Water master plan.** Implementation of the Water Master Plan is required to support future development of the county. Reclassification of the Neuse River as a drinking water source and implementation of the proposed water supply watershed land use controls are required as part of the overall implementation of the master plan.
- **Sewer master plan.** The Water and Sewer Authority has received grant funding for development of a master sewer plan for the county. The natural resource analysis indicates that as much as 60% of the undeveloped land in the planning area has severe limitations for septic tanks, making sewer service essential for future development in some areas.

Sewer is an essential service for supporting economic development. In the master planning process, priority consideration should be given to provision of sewer services in the primary and secondary enterprise areas shown on the Future Land Use Map.

- **Highway system.** The NC Board of Transportation is responsible for maintaining the county road system and for constructing new facilities. The county should

continue to support a coordinated local effort to identify priority highway improvement and new facilities and to have them included in the Transportation Improvement Program.

Protection of right-of-way is an important part of a successful road construction program and is a way that the county can support construction of new facilities. Due to the length of time between identification of a project and right-of-way acquisition and construction, right-of-way is often already developed. Where right-of-way has been identified, subdivision regulations can protect a level of protection by requiring that subdividers reserve the portion of the right-of-way located on a proposed subdivision. The state would then have an opportunity to purchase the right-of-way within a set time limit. Right-of-way reservation has the added advantage of helping to ensure that the subdivision design is coordinated with the highway.

3. Voluntary agricultural districts

Decisions to continue farming or to convert the land to other uses are mainly economic and are beyond the influence of the county. However, the county can take some steps to support its farming community and to help ensure that agriculture will remain an important part of the local economy and that working farms will remain a part of the rural landscape.

- The county, working through the Cooperative Extension Service, should explore the feasibility of establishing an Agricultural Advisory Board and creating *voluntary agricultural districts*. These districts allow farmers, who choose to participate, protection from nuisance suits from persons who purchase land in the area; they may allow the waiver of water and sewer fees and assessments until such time as the land is connected to a system; and they place limits on condemnation by local and state agencies.
- The county and its partner agencies should undertake a detailed review of the impacts of proposed extensions of public services and facilities that are development generators on bona fide farms. Where such extensions may induce development that will result in the loss of farms, the agencies may consider alternatives.

4. Cooperative planning

Many of the residents of the planning area live within the extra territorial planning jurisdictions (ETJ) of the county's four municipalities. At the community meetings, these residents expressed dissatisfaction with the ETJ arrangement. As a step toward solving this problem, the county should encourage a joint planning effort between the

county planning board and the planning boards of the municipalities to develop detailed land use plans for the growth areas surrounding the municipalities. This will give residents of the unincorporated area a more active role in land use planning and implementation for their communities.

In addition, as the GTP completes its land use planning and development review requirements, it is an opportunity for the county to explore the advisability of an inter-local agreement to administer implementation.

Longer-term strategies

1. Protection of commercial corridors

The county's commercial corridors are important business locations, and they frequently provide a first impression to visitors and businesses making decisions about locating in the county. Therefore, the close attention should be paid to the appearance of businesses located in these areas, particularly those with unsightly outdoor operations and/or storage. Like some other counties, Lenoir County may wish to consider regulations for businesses, such as junkyards, that prevent locations in the areas high traffic corridors and that provide for proper screening in other locations.

2. Recreation and tourism

The should consider developing a water trail system throughout the county. Neuse River and the county's creeks and streams are a major resource for the development of water trails to support public and commercial recreation activities. The Neuse is already recognized as an outstanding water trail through the county, with ratings of good to excellent by *The Paddler's Guide*. Tull's Millpond and Kelly's Millpond connected by Southwest Creek to the River offer another opportunity for trail development. Contentnea Creek is an additional water trail resource for the county.

Water trails offer a major recreation outlet for the residents of the county. But they are also a significant opportunity for commercial recreation. According to estimates from the US Department of Commerce, nearly 160,000 adults participated in canoeing or kayaking in coastal NC in 1999. Related businesses include guides, rentals, shuttle services, outfitters, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and restaurants.

According to experience in other counties, the water trail system will require creation or designation of a lead organization. The lead organization will be responsible for the following general tasks: 1) funding strategies; 2) development and implementation of a master plan; 3) coordination with community organizations, land owners, and existing businesses; and 4) on-going operation and maintenance.

3. Planned communities

With ample land suited for golf course or retirement communities, the county should encourage development of planned communities to serve a growing retirement population and to support its economic development programs. The option for planned communities should be recognized in the development of water, sewer, and highways and developers should be encouraged to take advantage for the flexibility offered in the subdivision regulations for *planned unit development*.

Appendix 1

Summary of First Community Meetings

Things I love about Lenoir County and would not want to change...

- The county's rural setting with viable farms, many of which are small family farms, and the open farmland and woodland associated with farming.
- Low crime rate and a sense of public safety.
- Good schools with programs that are easily accessible and that are based in the community.
- Quiet, well-kept residential neighborhoods with community-minded neighbors that are impacted with few incompatible land uses and that are located outside of the incorporated areas of the county.
- Good fire protection and emergency medical services.
- Availability of family oriented community organizations, including churches, civic organizations, and character building programs such as boy and girl scouts, explorers, and 4H.
- Good water systems.
- County's potential for growth.
- Good natural resources and clean environment; soils that are conducive to any type of agriculture.
- Minimal state and local regulations and a lack of zoning which allows property owners maximum flexibility in decisions regarding development and use of their land.

Things that I would like to change in the county...

- Increase the number of good-paying jobs by identifying and removing the factors that inhibit growth; recruiting larger, quality industries with high paying jobs; and promotion of the GTP
- Improve maintenance and enhancements of existing road system – repair and resurfacing, installation of safety measures such as signals and turn lanes; and roadside mowing, ditch maintenance, and litter control
- Install a county sewer system to replace septic tanks where needed
- Improve communication and cooperation between county and city/towns
- More variety and quality retail establishments
- Decrease the county's dependence on the GTP for economic development
- Develop the major road improvements included in the TIP - Interstate connections to I-40 and I-95 and the US 70 By-pass around Kinston