



Maple Hill Small Area Plan

Pender County Department of Planning and
Community Development

February 18, 2014

DRAFT



Maple Hill Small Area Plan

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Section I. Introduction

Maple Hill is an unincorporated community located on the northeastern side of Pender County, North Carolina. Generally, the community is bounded by Duplin County, North Carolina to the north, the Angola Bay Game Lands to the west, the Holly Shelter Game Lands to the South and the southwestern portion of Onslow County, North Carolina, to the east, with a portion of the Maple Hill neighborhood extending into Onslow County.

Like many areas in Pender County, the Maple Hill neighborhood is largely defined by its rural character, but it is the community's strong emphasis on family, faith, and heritage that sets it apart. There are a few commercial establishments in the community, including three grocery stores, Maple Hill Medical Services, an auto repair center and a Scotchman gas station. However, the area is predominantly low density, single family homes, surrounded by agricultural lands and natural areas.

In recent years, the Maple Hill community has experienced a fair amount of disinvestment, due not only to tough economic conditions but to local environmental and geographical challenges as well, especially compared to other areas of Pender County. Residents are concerned about a lack of economic opportunities in the area and the deficit of public and private services in close proximity to the neighborhood. The neighborhood is also in need of capital infrastructure improvements as well as recreational opportunities and programming.

Purpose of this Small Area Plan

Given these challenges, County stakeholders, including the Board of Commissioners, recognized that the Maple Hill neighborhood could benefit from a focused planning effort to help the community proactively address issues moving forward. Since County support for Small Area Plans is identified not only in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, but also in the 2010-2012 Priority Implementation Plan, the Board approved a resolution for the creation of the Maple Hill Small Area Plan in January 2013.

Specifically, The Maple Hill Small Area Plan is intended to help Pender County stakeholders address many of the challenges facing the Maple Hill neighborhood and chart a path to meeting these challenges. To accomplish this, the Plan not only documents existing conditions, but also provides goals and action items to help guide County officials and staff with future policy making, development decisions, and capital infrastructure investments in the Maple Hill community.



Maple Hill is a rural, family-oriented community, empowered by a sense of self-reliance, togetherness and faith.

--Maple Hill Steering Committee



Materials for a Maple Hill Community Outreach meeting in January, 2013

The Planning Process

The key to every plan is a thoughtful public involvement strategy that is integrated into the planning process. Accordingly, this Plan was developed using an inclusive process with a significant amount of local input. Area residents were engaged throughout the planning process and exhibited a great sense of ownership over the goals and implementation strategies outlined in this document. The planning process, including the community outreach that was conducted to create this Plan, is outlined below, and then explained in more detail in Section III.

The planning effort was spearheaded by the members of the Maple Hill Small Area Steering Committee, who were appointed by the Board of Commissioners, after a rigorous application process. The Committee's stated mission was: to plan, implement, and collaborate on matters related to Maple Hill as a potential growth area. Specifically:

- ❖ Concentrate commercial zoning in the Hwy 53 section of the community;
- ❖ Improve existing infrastructure, proper drainage, and transportation;
- ❖ Strengthen a partnership with local government officials by meeting regularly with County Commissioners; and
- ❖ Showcase the area's unique natural resources, cultural arts, and community sportsmanship.

Along with the Mission Statement, the Maple Hill Small Area Steering Committee drafted a Vision Statement to define how the neighborhood functions today and provide a vision of what the neighborhood can be in the decades to come:

Maple Hill's vision is to celebrate its rural characteristics, togetherness and self-reliance while refining the quality of life for residents. Emphasis will be placed on stimulating economic development by increasing existing commercially-oriented areas and enhancing infrastructures services, producing improvements to residential areas, and continuing infrastructure maintenance and improvements to ensure adequate stormwater runoff control.

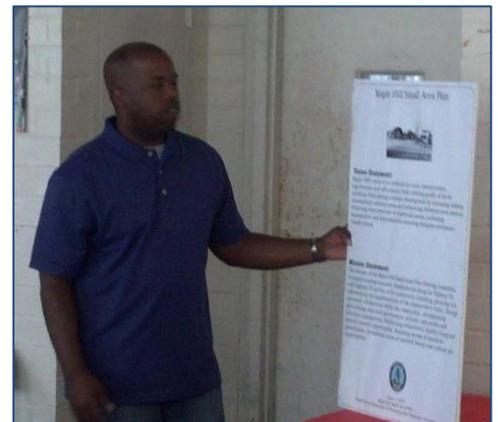
Using this vision as a compass, the Steering Committee, Maple Hill residents, and County stakeholders, created this Plan to help the neighborhood realize this vision and refine the quality of life for residents.

WHAT IS A SMALL AREA PLAN?

A Small Area Plan (SAP) is a policy document that analyzes, evaluates, reviews the constraints and opportunities, and develops goals and policies beyond the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan within a specified geographic area.

The primary purpose of the SAP is to develop a vision and subsequent actions that will realize the needs and uniqueness of the specific community. This is done with the guidance of the planning staff and on-going input from project stakeholders.

--Pender County Planning and
Community Development



A member of the Steering Committee reading the Mission Statement and Vision Statement for the Committee

Relationship to Other County Plans

This Plan has been developed for a specific, delineated area in northeastern Pender County. It does not replace any of the County's current long range planning documents, but rather serves to augment the goals and policies of these existing plans, while providing more targeted analysis and planning for the Maple Hill community. Brief summaries of Pender County's current planning documents and a discussion of how each one is relevant to the Maple Hill Small Area Plan are provided below.

❖ **COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN**

The County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the main policy source for future land development within Pender County. Objectives of the Plan include: coordinating the planning and extension of infrastructure, accommodating the development of and placement of a variety of housing types, ensuring adequate recreation and opens space opportunities, and mitigating the effects of natural hazards. Future land use classifications and a Future Land Use Map for the County, including the Maple Hill community, are also included in the Plan. The Plan was last adopted in 2010, and is available on the County website.

❖ **PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

Along with the Comprehensive Plan, the County also adopted a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2010. While the Plan addresses needs throughout the County, it specifically notes the deficiency of parks and recreational opportunities in Maple Hill and provides specific recommendations for how recreational opportunities, programming, and open space may be improved in and around the Maple Hill area. The goals and policies identified in this Master Plan are included in the goals and action items of this Small Area Plan (Section VI and VII, respectively).

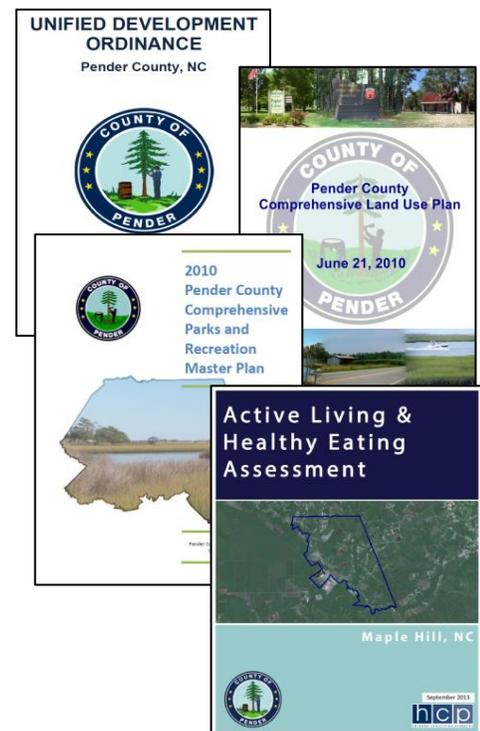
❖ **ACTIVE EATING AND HEALTHY LIVING ASSESSMENT**

In 2013, Pender County received funding assistance from the North Carolina Community Transformation Grant Program (Region 8) to conduct a health assessment of the Maple Hill Community. The Assessment was written by Holland Consultant Planners, and coordinated with the Pender County Planning Staff and the Maple Hill Small Area Steering Committee. The Assessment identifies barriers to accessing healthy foods and active living in the community and identifies opportunities to improve these topic areas in the community. The goals and policies identified in this report are included in the goals and action items of this Plan (Section VI and VII, respectively).

SMALL AREA PLANS ARE INTENDED TO:

- address the unique character and issues and rapidly changing conditions within each area;
- provide a more focused opportunity for residents to get involved in planning for their community;
- address more specific issues relevant to each area in terms of growth and land use goals;
- encourage and enable appropriate future growth within the boundaries of each area; and
- provide focus on the need for capital facilities investments that support land use policies for these areas.

--Pender County Comprehensive Plan



Plan Layout

This Plan is divided into eight major sections. This section, Section I, has provided an introduction to the Plan, the planning process, and the reasoning behind the development of the Plan. Section II sets the stage for the Plan by providing the history and context of the Maple Hill neighborhood. Section III, Plan Development and Community Outreach, documents the efforts that went in to the creation of this Plan and the outreach that was conducted to engage neighborhood residents in the planning process. Section IV provides evaluations of the existing conditions of the neighborhood

and documents the current situation of the neighborhood, focusing on the following seven topics:

- ❖ Land Use;
- ❖ Economic Development;
- ❖ Housing,
- ❖ Transportation;
- ❖ Services and Utilities;
- ❖ Parks and Recreation; and
- ❖ Community Heritage and Sense of Place.

Based on the analysis provided in Section IV, Section V—Neighborhood Assets and Issues—summarizes the major assets of the Maple Hill community, as well as the most significant challenges the neighborhood faces. Sections VI, VII and VIII then look to the future—identifying the goals designed to meet the identified challenges (Section VI) and outlining the specific action steps that will be taken to accomplish these goals (Section VII). Finally, a future land use map illustrates how development might be anticipated over the next decade (Section VIII). At the end of the Plan, Appendix A provides full page copies of the maps referenced throughout the document.

Maple Hill Small Area Plan Layout	
Section I:	Introduction
Section II:	History
Section III:	Plan Development and Community Outreach
Section IV:	Existing Conditions
Section V:	Neighborhood Assets and Issues
Section VI:	Neighborhood Goals
Section VII:	Maple Hill Action Plan
Section VIII:	Future Land Use Map

Section II. History

Maple Hill is said to have received its name from a large grove of Maple trees standing on a hill, which were both uncommon in this typically low-lying area. Located high on that ridge, it was those trees that first served as a landmark for the explorers traveling up the Northeast Cape Fear River in the 1600s, and who eventually first called this place home.

While the Maple Trees are no longer on that ridge, the core values of the people who first settled here remain the same. Built on faith, family, and community, the descendants of these settlers, who still live in the area today, continue to emphasize these principles. Much has changed in Maple Hill over the last 200 years, but over the duration, the residents of this quiet neighborhood have continued to focus on those three founding values.

Beginning Settlements

The first recorded settlements began in the Maple Hill area around 1750, preceding the creation of Pender County. At that time, the Maple Hill area was still part of New Hanover County and the earliest settlements in Maple Hill can be found recorded in the New Hanover Register of Deeds. One of the first known and largest settlements in the area was the James Family Settlement known as Sycamore Spring Plantation, located along present day Cypress Road. The James Family played a very instrumental role in the development and evolution of the community. Similar to other present day residents of Maple Hill, the James Family has owned the same tract of land since 1774. The James Family and the slaves that tirelessly worked the fields of the Sycamore Springs Plantation played a large role in the development and settlement of the Maple Hill community. With their hard work, a local economy in Maple Hill originated, and more people began settling in Maple Hill. The new settlers that moved in were also able to successfully farm a variety of crops including tobacco, corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, and wheat, and by the start of the 19th century, the local Maple Hill economy was growing and thriving.

Historical Development

In 1804, the first church in the area was also established and constructed. The church, originally constructed for the Quaker faith, was the first community-cooperative-enterprise undertaken and it was open for any faith to utilize. The church was also used for secular functions, including square dances and Sunday lunches, helping unite the community and providing a focal point for community activities and events.



The Maple Hill Community -- 2013



Sycamore Springs Plantation - 2013.

The small economy continued to grow, subsisting mostly on farming, until the mid-1800s, when the locals, including Joseph Blossom and Gibson James, two of the area's most successful property owners, opened sawmills and turpentine distilleries along Shaken and Shelter Creek. While this production was successful at diversifying the local economy, traveling to the Wilmington market at that time was limited to land, and the trip was long, limiting the amount of commerce for Maple Hill locals. To decrease travel time, the locals established a boat landing along Holly Shelter Creek, which gave the locals a new, critical way to travel to Wilmington, relatively quickly. By the time Pender County was formed in 1875, the Maple Hill area was flourishing with a variety of local sources for production and an accessible travel way to get their goods to market.

The community faced its first major weather-related setback in 1908, when the area was left devastated from a severe storm and impending floodwaters. Floodwater records were broken throughout the community along Holly Shelter Creek, devastating crops, destroying homes, and making Highway 53, the only travel way into the area at that time, impassable. The Post Office was cut off for five weeks following the storm.

Residents and farmers alike, however, worked across racial boundaries to rebuild the community, and as the years progressed, farming, production, trade and population continued increasing. In the 1920s, the area saw the addition of three Rosenwald schools including the Laurel School in 1921, Lee's Chapel School in 1923, and Maple Hill School in 1926. These schools were part of thousands constructed across the nation for rural communities. Today, however, only the Laurel School and Maple Hill School buildings are still in existence, though neither are operational and both are in need of substantial structural improvements.

Hurricanes and Weather-Related Challenges

Over the years Maple Hill has continued to face the power and destruction of many significant hurricanes, including Hurricane Hazel in October 1954 and Hurricane Fran in 1996. Both of these storms brought strong winds and rainfall that flooded the rural landscape and destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses in the process. However, the impacts of Hazel and Fran were relatively mild compared to the destruction Maple Hill faced after Hurricane Floyd in 1999. A category 4 hurricane, Floyd swept across southeastern North Carolina, dropping over twenty inches of rain on the region, flooding the entire community. Not only did the rushing water ruin crops, kill livestock, and destroy homes, but the stagnant water became contaminated which created health concerns and illnesses in Maple Hill, and hundreds of homes in the



The Rochelle House located at NC Highway 50 and Old Maple Hill Road was the location of the local general store.

HISTORIC FAMILIES IN MAPLE HILL:

The end of the Civil War brought a number of new families to Maple Hill, many of them African American. Many of these same families still live in Maple Hill today, including the Rochelles, Laniers, and Holms, Wootens, Watkins, Shepards and Marshburns, Farriors, Picketts, Nixons, Newtons, Batts, Foys, Powers, and others

--A Brief History of the Maple Hill Community, Mr. Bryant Shepard

community were determined to be uninhabitable. The lasting impacts of Hurricane Floyd are still seen today. Since then, the Maple Hill community has struggled to rebuild; but while progress has been slow, the community, as always, has rebounded. With County help, residents have worked together to get the funding needed to make the necessary repairs and improvements and help those who needed it the most.

Modern Day Maple Hill

Since its founding, Maple Hill has experienced its share of loss; from the loss of the farms, sawmills, and turpentine distilleries that first dotted the rural landscape, to the loss of the celebrated Rosenwald schools, and the property damages suffered after all of the many Hurricanes, the effects and struggles of these losses remain visible to the families that—for decades—have called Maple Hill home.

Maple Hill's story is one of resilience and rebirth. Just as the community worked together in 1908 to rebuild the area's farms and industries, the neighborhood also came together as a community almost a century later to overcome the effects of Hurricane Floyd. That commitment to faith, family and community continues today, evidenced by the yearly family reunions, resilient church spirit, and the yearly Maple Hill Fall Festival and Parade. In the years to come, Maple Hill will no doubt continue to face a number of economic and geographical challenges, but the strong ties and spirit of the neighborhood residents ensure that the community is prepared for the challenge.



Hurricane Floyd, as seen from space – September, 1999

Section III. Plan Development and Community Outreach

The Maple Hill Small Area Plan was drafted over a period of 14 months—a process which included a variety of public participation opportunities. Multiple avenues were available for residents, landowners, and others to become involved and share their enthusiasm and ideas for their community. Specifically, the public participation process included the formation of a Steering Committee, a number of community outreach meetings, and the distribution and analysis of a neighborhood survey. Each of these public participation elements is described in more detail below.



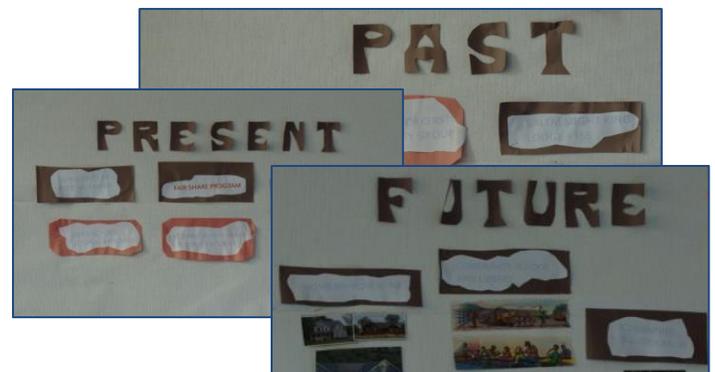
Members of the Maple Hill neighborhood at a Community Outreach meeting in January, 2013

Community Outreach Meetings

County Planning Staff began the planning process for the Maple Hill Small Area Plan by holding a community outreach meeting on January 26, 2013 to introduce the small area planning process to the Maple Hill community. Three other outreach meetings were held throughout the 14-month process: two to collect public input on key neighborhood issues and to discuss plan goals and strategies, and one final meeting, in December 2013 to present and discuss the final plan. These meetings also provided opportunity for members of the study area to review the plan and provide feedback.

Maple Hill Steering Committee

The Pender County Board of Commissioners appointed ten members of the neighborhood to serve on the Maple Hill Steering Committee, alongside the Planning Staff, to actively engage residents in the Small Area Plan. These members were chosen from a rigorous application process to ensure a broad and diverse Steering Committee. Throughout the process, the Committee played an instrumental role in determining the study area, developing a vision statement, and drafting the goals and policies for the Plan. Along with the scheduled meetings, the Steering Committee also met



Public Input from the Maple Hill residents at one of the Public Outreach Meetings

several times independent of the Planning Staff to discuss relevant planning issues and strategies. The Committee's leadership in the process and knowledge of the Maple Hill community were essential in creating a Plan that was reflective of the area.

Maple Hill Small Area Plan Survey

In addition to the community outreach meetings and formation of a Steering Committee, the County Planning Staff also distributed a survey in order to encourage public participation in the process. The survey included 29 questions and assessed citizens' views on the local economy, land use, housing, services, community pride, and future vision of Maple Hill. In total, 95 surveys were completed by community members. The information and input collected from the surveys were used in conjunction with the ideas and material gathered at the community outreach meetings, to develop the goals and policies outlined later in the Plan.

The image shows three overlapping pages from the Maple Hill Small Area Plan Survey. The top page is the title page, followed by a page with questions about community pride and future vision, and a final page with questions about the survey itself and a thank you note.

Pages from the Neighborhood Survey

Public Review and Comment

Throughout the process, the County Planning Staff and the Maple Hill Steering Committee members communicated regularly with the County Planning Board and Board of Commissioners, providing opportunities for public input and comment. A final draft of the Plan was made available to the Pender County Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners on December 9, 2013, and Planning Staff held a community meeting in Maple Hill on December 14, 2013 to present the final draft Plan to the community. The Plan was then published and opened for public review and comment through January 24, 2014. After final revisions and edits, the Maple Hill Small Area Plan was submitted to the Pender County Board of Commissioners and was formally adopted by the Board on February 18, 2014.



Members of the Maple Hill neighborhood at a Community Outreach meeting in January, 2013

Section IV. Existing Conditions

Community Profile

As one of the oldest and most remote areas in the County, Maple Hill has managed to retain its rural, agricultural nature. Economic growth has been slow, and the area remains mostly pastoral, with a number of natural and forested parcels. Houses are modest in size, and there are a number of vacant units scattered throughout the area. Aside from a few single-lot projects, there are no large redevelopment efforts taking place in the area.

Land Use and Economic Development

Maple Hill’s localized economy is relatively small. Most lots are zoned for agricultural and residential uses, with a few parcels zoned for General Business use. The business parcels tend to be clustered around the intersection of NC Hwy 50 and NC Hwy 53, and non-residential development consists primarily of three convenience stores, Maple Hill Medical Services, and an auto repair center. The majority of land in Maple Hill is zoned Rural Agricultural, and occupied by single family homes and farmland.

The limited economic development is largely attributed to the area’s landscape and environmental features. Situated in the North Carolina Tidewater Region, Maple Hill’s topography consists primarily of low lying, non-riverine flatlands. There is some higher ground, but a significant portion of the study area is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area, in which development is not recommended due to the high possibility that the land will be inundated during a major storm event. While development is not prohibited in identified Flood Hazard Areas, it may be more expensive since homes and businesses must be built above Base Flood Elevation to qualify for flood insurance.

The shallow topography and poorly draining soils in other parts of the study area also present development limitations, as providing underground infrastructure, including sewer and water lines, is simply not possible. The section below explains these factors in more detail.

❖ 100 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN

Moore’s Creek and Holly Shelter Creek are valuable natural assets for the community; however, these two Creeks and their tributaries pose substantial flooding concerns for the residents. Due to the prevalence of these water bodies within the community, a significant portion of the Maple Hill area lies within the 100-Year Floodplain. Most recently, floods of this magnitude occurred in this area in 1984 (Hurricane

Table 1: Zoning

Zoning Class	Acreage	Percent
Rural Agricultural	11546.08	84.3%
Environmental Conservation	1326.26	9.7%
Residential Performance	490.53	3.6%
General Industrial	216.19	1.6%
Office and Institutional	76.43	0.6%
General Business	39.53	0.3%
TOTAL:	11,931	100%

BASE FLOOD ELEVATION:

Base Flood Elevation is a determination of the water surface elevations of the base flood as published in the Flood Insurance Study. The BFE is the regulatory requirement for the elevation or floodproofing of structures. BFEs are shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps. In Maple Hill, the Special Flood Hazard Area are shown on Map Numbers 3720338400K, 3720338200J, and 3720430200K.

Diana), 1985 (Hurricane Gloria), 1996 (Hurricane Bertha), 1996 (Hurricane Fran), 1998 (Hurricane Bonnie) and 1999 (Hurricane Floyd – which reached 500-year floodplain levels). While mitigation efforts have been made to decrease the impact of future hurricanes, many properties remain highly susceptible to flooding, which could potentially impact future development, as could insurance costs.

❖ **SOILS**

Further compounding flooding concerns are the three most prevalent and some of the most poorly draining soils in the Maple Hill community, which include the Woodington Fine Sandy Loam, Muckalee Loam, and Grifton Loamy Fine Sand. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), drawbacks to the Woodington Fine Sandy Loam include its poor draining capability and tendency to cave along ditchbanks, both of which can have negative effects on building development. Similarly, the Muckalee Loam floods frequently and is not suitable for cropland, building development, sanitary facilities, or recreational development.

All three soil types are considered by the USDA to have “severe” development limitations for both recreational development (e.g., camp and picnic areas, playgrounds, paths and trails) and Building Site Development (e.g., dwellings, small commercial buildings, roads, and landscaping). Soils are classified as “severe” if soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increases in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance are required. As a result, these soils make new development in Maple Hill more difficult and expensive to build upon.

❖ **PROTECTED SPECIES**

Despite the environmental concerns, however, the Maple Hill community has a varied and unique natural environment, which the residents are quite proud of. The community is home to two plant species of federally endangered status—the Golden Sedge and Cooley’s Meadowrue. Similarly, the nearby Holly Shelter Gameland houses two additional federally endangered species, including the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and the Rough-Leaf Loosestrife. The community is also home to one of the few native settings of the Venus Flytrap in the entire world. Researchers come from all over to explore and examine these unique species, further highlighting the exceptionality of the community’s vast natural resources.



The Maple Hill area is known for having poorly draining soils, which can make development difficult and expensive.



From top left: Protected species in the Maple Hill community include the Golden Sedge (Carex Aurea), the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (Picoides Borealis), Rough-Leaf Loosestrife (Lysimachia Asperulaefolia), Venus Flytrap (Dionaea)

Housing

The Maple Hill neighborhood is primarily residential. The majority of housing units found in the neighborhood are single-family, with some mobile and manufactured homes. In the delineated study area for this Plan, there are 772 people and 265 households, based on data from the 2010 Census. These numbers were generated using the software Pcenus, which allows users to delineate boundaries and gather the data therein. Of note in Maple Hill is the stark difference between the Average Household Income (\$24,888) and Median Household Incomes (\$21,763) in Maple Hill compared to Pender County (\$57,053, and \$45,322, respectfully). See Table 2.

	Maple Hill	Pender County
Population	772	55,025
Households	265	20,546
Land Area (Sq. Miles)	18.2	869.8
Average Household Income	\$24,888	\$57,053
Median Household Income	\$21,763	\$45,322
Median Age	44.6	41.6
Population – 60 years or older	22%	20.8%
Population – Male	43.5%	72.3%
High School Diploma, GED or higher education	75%	87%
Over 20 Minutes travel time to Work	77%	68%

Source: 2010 US Census, using Pcenus, which is a software program that identifies demographic information from non-standard geographic boundaries.

The Pender County Housing Needs Assessment conducted in 2012 assessed homes throughout Pender County, which included the evaluation of properties in Maple Hill. Of the 27 housing units evaluated, 13 frame built homes and 12 Manufactured Homes were identified as “Dilapidated”, “Moderately Deteriorated” or “Severely Deteriorated,” indicating a potential need in the community.

Transportation

Pender County’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is currently in the process of being updated. The CTP is a composite of the existing transportation system and recommendations to ensure public transportation planning and investment is prioritized and given adequate County and regional consideration and planning. Data collected during the CTP process, as well as the resulting recommendations related to the Maple Hill area are discussed below.

❖ **ROADWAY SYSTEM ANALYSIS**

The Maple Hill study area is largely centered around the NC Hwy 50 and NC Hwy 53 junction in the northeastern part of Pender County. These roads are the major connections to and from the community and are the most heavily traveled in the area, particularly the

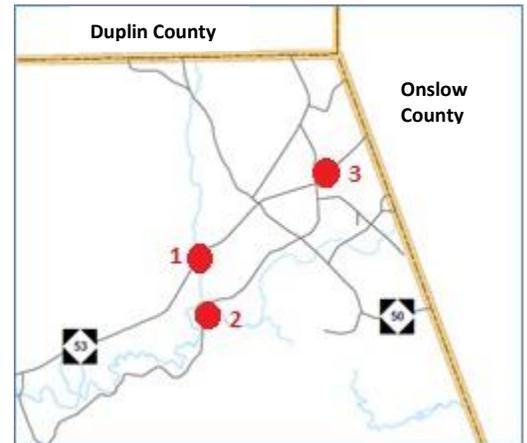
Road Segment	Average Daily Traffic			Capacity
	2011	2012	2040	2011-2040
Hwy 53, south of Hwy 50	3,300	3,500	4,400	16,400
Hwy 53, north of Hwy 50	2,500	2,600	3,400	16,400
Hwy 50, east of Hwy 53	1,700	-	2,700	15,900

NC Hwy 53 segment south of NC Hwy 50 towards Burgaw. This segment is particularly important for residents commuting to Burgaw for work. While

average daily traffic volumes increased last year according to NCDOT, these important segments are not operating anywhere near capacity, meaning additional roadway construction near Maple Hill is not needed at this time.

❖ **BRIDGES**

Three bridges in the study area were found to be “functionally obsolete” through the CTP planning process and therefore have been designated as deficient: (1) the bridge on NC Hwy 53 over Angola’s Creek, (2) the bridge on SR 1520 over Holly Shelter Creek, and (3) the bridge on NC Hwy 53 over Moore’s Creek. “Functionally obsolete” bridges are ones that were built to standards that are not used today and may not have adequate lane widths, shoulder widths, or may be occasionally flooded. The deficient classification for these bridges allows them to qualify for Federal replacement funds should that become necessary in the future.



Three bridges in the Maple Hill area are designated “functionally obsolete”: (1) over Angola’s Creek, (2) over Holly Shelter Creek, and (3) over Moore’s Creek.

❖ **BUSES AND SIDEWALKS**

Public transportation in Pender County is a service provided by Cape Fear Transit Authority. Currently, bus routes do not extend to the Maple Hill community and sidewalks and bicycle lanes are nearly nonexistent. The CTP recommends the extension of a bus route from NC Hwy 53 to the Onslow County line, as well as providing a park and ride lot near the County borders. Another CTP recommendation is that the Cape Fear Transit Authority work with Onslow County to coordinate public transportation services to the degree possible.

❖ **PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Maple Hill residents also have access to Pender Adult Services, Inc., a private company, licensed by the NC Division of Facility Services Department of Human Resources, which serves any Pender County resident 18 or older. This service operates from 6:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. taking group shuttles as well as individual transport.

PAS operates a group shuttle, giving rides on two routes for Maple Hill residents. Once a week, PAS also brings residents into Burgaw or Jacksonville to buy groceries and other necessities, and eat lunch in Burgaw. There is a donation arrangement that the residents pay either 0.25 or 0.50 cents to ride the van. PAS reports that the shuttle is utilized by 8-11 Maple Hill residents, all over the age of 70, two days a week. Individual transport is available for medical purposes, but PAS reports that there is a long waiting list for this service at this time.



Pender Adult Services offers neighborhood residents low cost transportation weekly to the towns of Jacksonville and Burgaw.

Services and Utilities

Due to the limited development within the Maple Hill community, utilities and services are also somewhat limited, but basic services are available for residents:

- While most residents use on-site septic and private wells, 345 properties currently receive County drinking water, and in 2012, the County placed 175 homes on wastewater infrastructure provided through the Maple Hill Water & Sewer District, making it the only residential development in an unincorporated area of the County with current access to public sewer service. The District’s water is purchased from the Chinquapin Water Association, Inc, located in Duplin County and the community receives solid waste service from the Maple Hill Convenience Center.
- Emergency response services are provided through the Maple Hill Volunteer Fire Department, Pender County Sheriff’s Department, and the Pender Emergency Medical Services & Rescue. Pender County’s EMS & Rescue Station 8 has one Quick Response Vehicle and utilizes transport trucks from either Station 1 or 6.
- The community is directly served by the US Postal Service, which recently entered into a new leasing agreement with the Maple Hill Resource Center to locate there for the foreseeable future.
- Since the schools located in Maple Hill have been closed, children are bused to other County locations. For the most part, children attend Burgaw Elementary School, Burgaw Middle School, and Heide Trask High School. Cape Fear Elementary, Pender Early College High School, and Pender High School provide service to some students as well.



The Maple Hill Water Tower



Maple Hill Public Services

Parks and Recreation

Few opportunities for active recreation exist in Maple Hill. While land is plentiful, areas of dedicated open space or recreational places are limited. Resources currently available in the community include the Maple Hill Resource Center, the N.C. Game Lands, and the Sandy Run Savannahs State Natural Area; all of which are discussed below.

❖ **MAPLE HILL RESOURCE CENTER**

The Maple Hill Resource Center is located on Maple Hill School Road within a former Pender County school building. The Resource Center serves as a community gathering place for Maple Hill area residents. Along with the community building, it features recreational amenities including an outdoor basketball court, a softball field, and a playground. Recently, through the County’s health promotion and



Completed in September, 2013, the new 0.6 mile walking trail loops the providing, providing a place for residents to walk while children play in the playground or on the Center’s basketball court.

disease prevention program, the Health Department was also able to build a paved walking trail around the Resource Center and provide new basketball nets for the basketball court. While improvements have been made, however, more outdoor renovations are still needed, as are improvements to the resource building itself.

❖ **NORTH CAROLINA GAME LANDS**

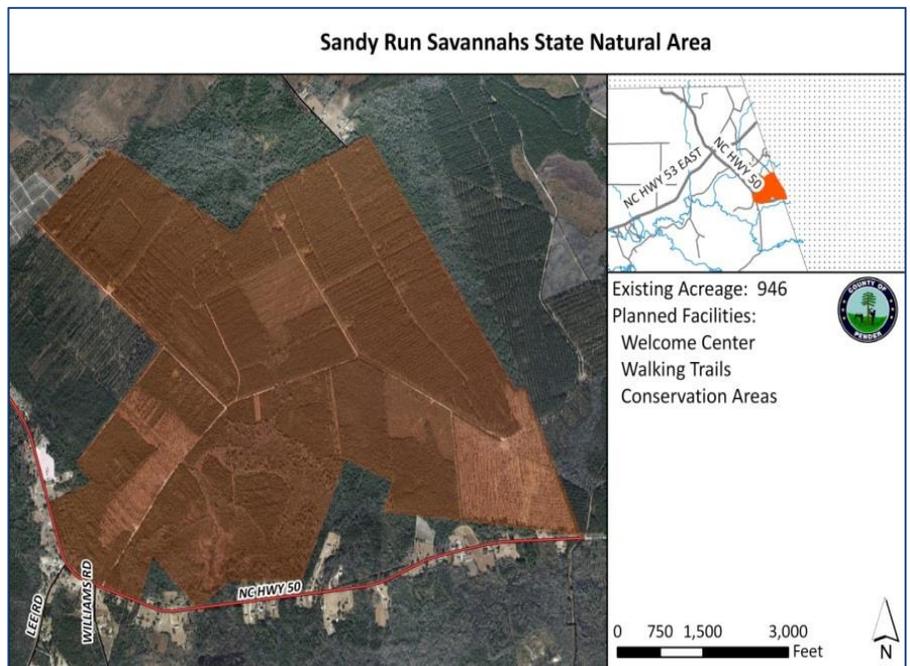
Pender County is host to almost 95,000 acres managed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission as State Game Lands. These areas include the Angola Bay Game Land (24,483 acres) and the Holly Shelter Game Land (64,743 acres), both of which border Maple Hill to the west and south, respectfully. While the game lands are used primarily for hunting purposes, other recreational opportunities are allowed in the game lands such as bird watching, bicycling, and nature photography. The Holly Shelter Game Land also features a camping area near Shaw Highway.



The WRC-managed game lands offer the county over 145 square miles of open space.

❖ **SANDY RUN SAVANNAHS STATE NATURAL AREA**

During the 2006 North Carolina General Assembly, legislators authorized two new areas into the State Parks System, including the Sandy Run Savannahs State Natural Area. Within Pender County, this included twelve parcels totaling around 1609 acres. While the area has much potential for scientific research, interpretation, and educational activities, it has little potential for construction of recreational facilities. However, additional land more suitable for facility development may be pursued in the future to enable additional recreational opportunities, specifically picnic shelters and other passive-recreation oriented facilities. The great biodiversity existing in the Sandy Run Savannahs provides a great opportunity for education for all ages. This could be utilized for school field trips, university studies, ecotourism, and other environment-based education and recreation.



The Sandy Run Savannahs State Natural Area

❖ **ASSESSMENT FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

In 2010, the County adopted a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which assessed the needs of the County, including the Maple Hill area. That Plan concludes:

"Despite the existing community center and recently created Sandy Run Savannahs State Natural Area, Maple Hill remains currently underserved by parks and recreation opportunities. As indicated by the survey... Maple Hill residents are eager to see more opportunities in their community... Amenities desired by the community include picnic areas and shelters, playground equipment, basketball courts, softball fields, bicycle paths, natural areas, walking trails, fitness trails, and multi-purpose fields, among others.

As overviewed earlier, the existing community center building and recreational amenities are in need of improvements, and additional recreational acreage and facilities are needed in the area to decrease the deficits that exist in the county's parks system. While the new state-managed natural area will preserve a large amount of land as open space, the development of both passive and active recreational amenities within the natural area will be minimal, if any. Based on the projected population increase in the area as a result of the growth of the military installations in Onslow County, it is important to plan for providing recreational opportunities in the Maple Hill area."

Then, as today, increased recreational opportunities and programming that promote healthy eating and active lifestyles in Maple Hill are priorities for neighborhood residents.

Community Heritage and Sense of Place

The Maple Hill community is rich with history, culture, heritage, and community pride. Family histories go back generations in the area, as do many of the community's buildings, including churches, residential dwellings, and other area structures. Maple Hill's real strength of history and community, however, is not in its structures; it is the families and people who still call Maple Hill home.

❖ **COMMUNITY STRENGTH AND SPIRIT**

Nestled in the northeastern portion of Pender County, Maple Hill is a small, tight-knit community with a long and rich history. As with the land, family stories have been passed down from generation to generation, so that the

The proximity of Maple Hill to existing recreation opportunities and schools puts residents at a disadvantage.

Some children generally don't get dropped off from the school bus until around 6-7pm, and there is no time left for afterschool sports or recreation. Additionally, for residents, both children and adults, to participate in recreation or go to a park, they have to drive a great distance. Because of these circumstances, children are often not able to participate in middle and high school athletics because they could not participate in the sports from an early age. This can potentially lead to drop-outs and other social problems with the youth. Many parents and grandparents drive great distances to allow for their children to participate in sports and recreational opportunities, and this creates a time and cost burden for the families that could be alleviated by providing opportunities closer to the Maple Hill area.

--Maple Hill Resident (in the Pender County Parks and Recreation Plan)

Maple Hill is a caring community. A community of unity. A community of L-O-V-E!

--Maple Hill Resident

history of the place, and the families that call Maple Hill home, is still alive and well. Buildings and homes in Maple Hill are referred to by their old family name, and people give directions by landmarks instead of street names. It is a community where people take pride in the care they take of each other – sharing produce and baked goods weekly, hosting family benefits and fundraisers, and ensuring community members have a roof to sleep under. Small family graveyards dot the landscape, and the community’s churches are prevalent and well attended, as are the potluck lunches that follow Sunday services.



The Maple Hill Civic Center

Many community members attribute the rural, and at times, harsh environment to the strong sense of community heritage and pride. Largely isolated geographically from the rest of Pender County by the Angola Bay and Holly Shelter Game Lands, the community is accustomed to being relatively self-reliant. There is a geographic racial divide in the community, but no racial animus. Community members attribute the geographic divide to the fact that land has been passed down through generations, with few properties in the area ever having been sold outside of the family. While the divide exists, the community’s commitment to faith, family, and neighbor is not geographically divided. Yearly family reunions, where everyone is invited ‘because we’re all family!’, and local festivals and benefits, are a testament to the community’s resilient strength and spirit.



One of three Rosenwald Schools constructed in the community, the (former) Laurel School still stands along NC Highway 50.

❖ **HISTORIC PLACES**

With Maple Hill’s rich history, it is perhaps not surprising that there are a number of historic structures in the area. In 2011, Pender County, along with a number of partners, including the Pender County Library, Pender County Tourism, Pender Historical Society, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, the NC Department of Cultural Resources, and the NC Office of State Archaeology, conducted a local inventory of historic sites, and found 14 sites of local significance in the Maple Hill area (See Table 4). Many of these sites are in very poor structural condition, and need a substantial amount of renovation, but residents would like to see as many of these sites preserved as possible, so the rich history of the Maple Hill area can be maintained for generations to come.

Table 4: Sites of Local Significance in the Maple Hill Area	
1. Perry Raynor House	2. Robert Cowan House
3. Maple Hill Missionary Baptist Church	4. (Former) Maple Hill School
5. Maple Hill FWB Church	6. (Former) Laurel School
7. Kenneth Lanier House	8. Willie Walton House
9. Rochelle House	10. Oscar Wooten Store
11. Bryant Wooten Log Cabin	12. Oscar Wooten House
13. Bodge Lanier House	14. Stokes House

Section V. Neighborhood Assets and Issues

Neighborhood Assets

An important part of the small area planning process is identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a particular area or neighborhood. While honest assessments can be difficult, they are important in order to help decision makers and stakeholders find ways to take advantage of the neighborhood's assets while improving issues that are proving challenging for the area. To that end, the Maple Hill residents worked diligently throughout the planning process to identify their most important assets and most pressing issues. While there is certainly room for improvement in the neighborhood, many recognize what makes Maple Hill such a unique and special place to live.

Maple Hill is very family-oriented. It has great spiritual and moral values and is a good place to raise a family. We take care of each other.

--Maple Hill Resident

❖ **COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND PRIDE**

With its rich cultural and historical background, there is a very strong sense of heritage and pride in the Maple Hill area. Residents of the community love their home and would like to see the neighborhood continue to thrive in the coming decades. Unlike some older residential neighborhoods, Maple Hill has retained many of its residents over the long-term and neighborhood families and relationships often go back several generations. As such, the history of the Maple Hill is alive and well in the hearts and minds of its residents, providing a wealth of resources that many neighborhoods are not able to benefit from.



The Maple Hill Parade and Festival 2013

❖ **THE MAPLE HILL RESOURCE CENTER**

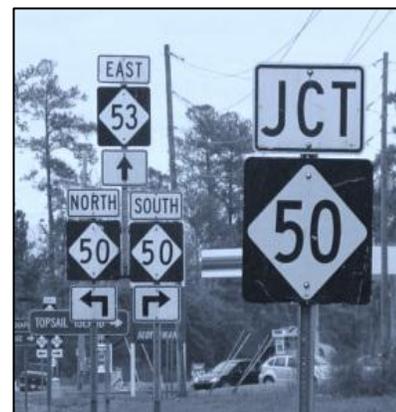
Located in the heart of the community, the Maple Hill Resource Center has been home to a number of public services and institutions over the years, including a school, an auxiliary sheriff's office, public health services, and Pender Adult Services. In 2013, the United States Post Office entered into a leasing agreement with the Resource Center to occupy part of the ± 13,000 square foot building. The existing facility features a basketball court, playground equipment, and a newly paved outdoor walking trail, along with indoor space for other potential community activities, the Maple Hill Resource Center is a tremendous asset that the community can leverage to accomplish a number of goals in this Plan.



The Maple Hill Resource Center - 2013

❖ **FEMA BUYOUT PROPERTIES**

Through the voluntary FEMA buyout program, 17 properties in the Maple Hill area have been purchased by the County. The lots have been cleared of structures and are now public property. By law, the lots must forever remain open space land. As such, these 17 lots provide the County and the community with the opportunity to use these lots to create public parks, playgrounds, tot lots, community gardens, or for other passive recreational uses. Though not all of these properties may be considered for public use, given the lack of public access, there are a number that do offer some potential. In Maple Hill, a community with few existing recreational spaces, these properties can potentially be real assets for the neighborhood. A map of the FEMA buyout properties is included in Appendix A.



The NC Hwy 53 and NC Hwy 50 Junction

❖ **LOCATION**

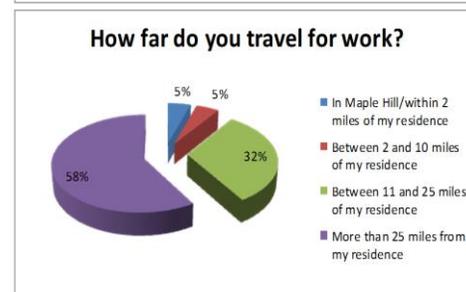
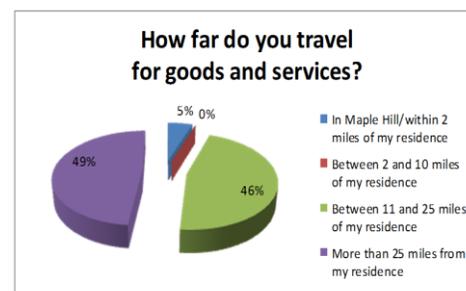
With its location at the junction of Highways 50 and 53, Maple Hill provides relatively convenient access to Jacksonville, Burgaw, and the beach, while still maintaining a rural, country way of life for residents. Further, while many areas within the County are developing higher priced housing, the neighborhood continues to provide adequate, market-rate affordable housing for Pender County residents.

Neighborhood Issues

Along with identifying assets, residents also worked to identify the most pressing issues facing Maple Hill, and brainstorm ways that these issues might be addressed. The major themes that emerged from the process are discussed below. Specific goals and targeted action items to address these challenges are detailed later in Sections VI and VII.

❖ **NEIGHBORHOOD JOBS AND SERVICES**

One of the toughest challenges for the Maple Hill community is rebounding from the disinvestment the neighborhood has experienced in recent decades. Losses in industry and public services, including the closure of the neighborhood schools, combined with the property losses suffered after the most recent hurricanes, have taken a heavy toll on the neighborhood. To overcome these challenges, new neighborhood-level actions are needed to foster economic opportunity and regain the neighborhood's vitality. Throughout the Small Area Planning process, residents expressed a desire to see more non-residential development locate in Maple Hill. Specifically, residents



Most residents travel very far for work, goods, and services. By increasing jobs and services in the community, residents would spend less time and money getting to work and accessing needed services.

expressed a desire for more restaurants, food stores, and banks, as well as more industrial uses to increase the area’s job base.

❖ **THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

A significant barrier to achieving the economic development and vitality sought by neighborhood residents is the area’s natural, low-lying topography. With a substantial portion of the Maple Hill properties located in the 100 year floodplain, development—particularly non-residential development—and public infrastructure improvements are riskier and more expensive than in other parts of the County. Moreover, the potential for flooding also presents a range public health issues. While a number of steps were taken after Hurricane Floyd to mitigate the effects of future floods, including improving the area’s septic systems and building new homes above Base Flood Elevation, many properties and residents still remain vulnerable. Continuing to address issues caused by the natural environment will be an ongoing challenge for the Maple Hill community.

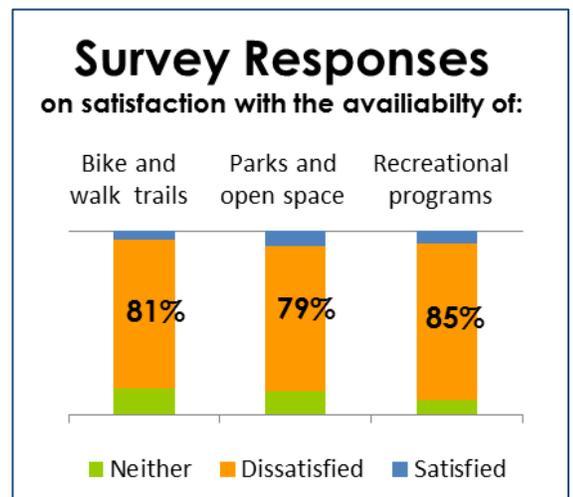
The County should focus its planning efforts on providing sewer in Maple Hill and expanding non-residential businesses on Highway 53 to benefit from the growth from Camp Lejeune.
–Maple Hill Resident

❖ **ACCESS**

While Maple Hill residents have easy access to Highways 50 and 53, the neighborhood’s location severely limits access to many public transportation options, including buses. Given the lack of services in the area, this is an important priority. Private transportation through Pender Adult Services is available, but improvements could be made with respect to coordination and routes to increase ridership. Therefore, along with encouraging the development of uses in proximity to the neighborhood, increasing the number of transportation options, and improving coordination efforts with the existing public transportation providers, will be critical to making strides on this issue.

❖ **ACTIVE LIVING**

There is a deficiency of parks and recreational opportunities in and around Maple Hill, and as is evident from the neighborhood survey (in the chart to the right), residents are quite dissatisfied with the lack of availability. The lack of opportunities for residents—especially for the children—to participate in recreational activities presents a range of social and health consequences. As discussed above, the Maple Hill Resource Center and FEMA buyout properties are two potential venues for the desired recreational programs, but finding multiple ways to



address this quality of life issue should be a priority both for the County and Maple Hill residents.

❖ **NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY**

Crime and neighborhood safety was identified in the Small Area Planning process as an important issue, as residents have indicated that they do not feel as safe as they would like in Maple Hill. Improvements to the physical environment, an increased Sheriff's presence, and the formation of a neighborhood watch group could help increase visibility, deter crime, and make residents feel safer in their homes.

❖ **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT**

While many residents are interested in ways to improve Maple Hill, the neighborhood does not currently have a collective voice for organizing around community initiatives. Even though portions of the neighborhood regularly communicate with each other, not having a neighborhood association or some other type of organized group makes it difficult for residents to reach consensus on issues, communicate to and with the entire community, and collectively engage in discussions with the County. Finding ways to address this communication gap—both internally and externally—and engage community stakeholders in the development of a shared vision for Maple Hill is essential to the neighborhood's vitality. Actively engaged residents, working collaboratively with County stakeholders, are key to successfully achieving the vision and goals outlined in this Plan.



Section VI. Neighborhood Goals

In order to realize the neighborhood vision identified at the beginning of the planning process, Maple Hill residents and County Planning Staff identified a number of goals necessary to address the neighborhood's most pressing issues, while simultaneously preserving and enhancing the neighborhood assets and qualities that residents are most proud of. This Section identifies these goals and explains broadly how the goals are intended to meet the neighborhood's challenges. These goals, in turn, then provide the basis for the action items identified in Section VII of this Plan.

Land Use and Economic Development

Generally, Maple Hill residents enjoy the existing low density residential, rural land use existing within the study area and do not wish to see an increase in residential land density or intensity. More commercial and industrial uses, as well as community services, however, are desired in targeted areas, particularly along the NC Hwy 50 and NC Hwy 53 corridors. The area's low density, shallow topography, and lack of public infrastructure, however, are hindering factors to economic development efforts that could bring new jobs to the area.

Land Use and Economic Development Goals	
Goal 1	Focus on long-term economic sustainability, job creation, and business opportunities through economic development efforts and land use policies that encourage appropriate non-residential investment in environmentally viable sites.
Goal 2	Support neighborhood commercial and retail opportunities with policies and infrastructure improvements that enhance neighborhood stability and further community revitalization.
Goal 3	Proactively and cooperatively protect existing development in environmentally sensitive areas (such as flood hazard areas) and endeavor to make development resilient to damage from flooding, wind, and other effects of natural disasters.

Looking forward, **capital improvements and land use policies that encourage development** along targeted corridors in non-flood prone areas would be beneficial, as would the location of community-based and workforce training organizations and the encouragement of home occupations and locally-operated businesses. Re-examining the current 2010 Comprehensive Land Use Plan to potentially define new land use classifications, or simply reconfiguring current classifications, presents a potential start, as does reexamining the current Pender County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to explore new zoning classifications in Maple Hill and new permitted uses. **Capital infrastructure planning** efforts to support new economic efforts could also be studied. Finally, since addressing the area's topographical challenges is essential to effective development, finding ways to **effectively, cooperatively, and proactively address the environmental constraints** is also a priority for Maple Hill. Therefore, the land use and economic development goals for Maple Hill address new economic policies, potential development opportunities, capital infrastructure investment, and resident involvement in order to improve the vibrancy of the community.

Housing

Along with increasing and improving the non-residential development opportunities in the Maple Hill area, focus on residential development is also needed. Generally speaking, the fewer the number of people living and working in any given area, the more difficult it is to support community services. Therefore,

increasing the Maple Hill population could potentially work to increase the potential for non-residential opportunities and services desired by the neighborhood.

Housing Goals	
Goal 1	Stimulate and attract residential investment to help decrease the number of vacancies in the Maple Hill area.
Goal 2	Increase funding, volunteer, and charitable opportunities for housing improvements, with an emphasis on assistance for vulnerable populations.
Goal 3	Enhance the visual character of the neighborhood in order to preserve and heighten community charm and pride.

Along with **attracting new residential investment**, the housing goals here also address the neighborhood's need for **housing improvements**, and **general neighborhood aesthetics**. As noted in the Pender County Housing Assessment, many structures in the neighborhood have weathered for decades and are now considered severely deteriorated, or dilapidated and in dire need of maintenance and repairs. Private and public improvements in this area could go a long way in enhancing the appearance of the neighborhood.

Transportation

Like many areas in Pender County, Maple Hill residents are heavily dependent on automobiles for transportation. This auto-dependency, combined with the lack of commercial uses or general services in close proximity to the

Transportation Goals	
Goal 1	Increase the number of transportation services and options in order to link the neighborhood to jobs, health care, and other local services.
Goal 2	Build capacity and ridership on the neighborhood's existing transportation networks.
Goal 3	Expand the network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways to promote more active transportation options for residents.

neighborhood, means residents must commute—and often cross county lines—to get the services they need. This puts a particular strain on the neighborhood's elderly and disabled populations who may not have access to a vehicle or may not be able to drive.

Therefore, with respect to transportation, neighborhood goals center on ways to improve **transportation options and availability**, particularly for vulnerable populations. Pender County Adult Services does provide low cost transportation for neighborhood residents into Jacksonville and Burgaw for groceries and supplies, but the service appears largely underutilized at present. On the other hand, there is a waiting list for medical transport. Understanding how these private transportation services operate and how they might be better coordinated with available and potential public transportation options could **help increase access for residents**. Along with these important issues, this Plan also makes a goal of **expanding the network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways** to promote more active transportation options for Maple Hill residents.

Services and Utilities

Due to Maple Hill’s rural character and limited development, utilities and services are also somewhat limited in the Maple Hill community. Increasing and improving the amount of capital investment and infrastructure is important not only for economic development, but for residential services as well. These investments are needed to help to Maple Hill residents reach the development potential they wish to see, particularly along the NC Hwy 53 and NC Hwy 50 corridors.

Services and Utilities Goals	
Goal 1	Encourage the development of infrastructure to attract new, local programs and businesses that provide jobs and needed services.
Goal 2	Create and improve opportunities for community residents to have access to educational and vocational resources.
Goal 3	Create an active and vibrant community where residents feel they are safe.

As such, **encouraging the development of infrastructure** is the primary goal for Maple Hill residents, though emphasis is also on **creating and improving neighborhood educational, social, and vocational programming**. Residents specifically identified library services, historic preservation efforts, and educational programs such as Head Start and other pre-kindergarten programs as programming they would encourage locating in Maple Hill. **Safety** is another concern for Maple Hill residents as they hope to see a greater Sheriff’s Department presence to deter crime and help them feel safer in their homes and neighborhood.

Parks and Recreation

Though there is an abundance of natural and agricultural lands in and around the Maple Hill area, there is a deficiency of dedicated parks and a limited number of recreational opportunities in the area. As such, neighborhood residents currently must travel to other places in Pender or Onslow Counties to participate in recreation programs or enjoy park facilities.

Parks and Recreation Goals	
Goal 1	Increase the number of opportunities for active recreation in the neighborhood.
Goal 2	Promote healthy eating in the Maple Hill community.
Goal 3	Increase the amount of true open space in the neighborhood.

As such, neighborhood residents currently must travel to other places in Pender or Onslow Counties to participate in recreation programs or enjoy park facilities.

With health of the community being a priority, the Parks and Recreation goals therefore focus on **increasing the number of active recreational spaces** in Maple Hill, as well as exploring new ways to **promote active living and healthy eating** and **increasing the amount of true open space** in the neighborhood. Creating new parks on existing County-owned land, revitalizing existing amenities, and supporting improvements at existing ones, are priorities in the community. Supporting community gardens and other ways to increase healthy food options in the community is a priority as well. These goals align with the goals and actions identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as well as the Active Living and Healthy Eating Assessment conducted in Maple Hill. Emphasis is placed on creating new parks and improving the existing facility at the Maple Hill Resource Center, as well as policy decisions and programming that will promote healthy eating and active lifestyles.

Community Heritage and Sense of Place

Maple Hill's heritage and the neighborhood's strong sense of place is perhaps the community's biggest asset. However, improvements are needed to ensure that the qualities and history that people know and value today will be present for future generations.

Community Heritage and Sense of Place Goals	
Goal 1	Strengthen the community's values and preserve Maple Hill's heritage and history by examining opportunities to conserve and/or preserve buildings.
Goal 2	Continue to build community character and establish and enhance a sense of place in Maple Hill by increasing the number of public engagement and community involvement opportunities.
Goal 3	Actively engage residents and other stakeholders in the planning and management of their neighborhoods.

Given the area's rich history and the number of historic sites and structures already identified in Maple Hill, **historical preservation efforts** are important to safeguard the rich history Maple Hill has to offer. While preserving the past is important, it is equally important to ensure that the current and future generations are able to continue the neighborhood's rich traditions. To that end, enhancing a sense of place in Maple Hill by **increasing the number of public engagement and community involvement opportunities** is also important. While this goal overlaps with previously identified recreation and health goals, it is also important in this context to ensure that residents feel connected to the neighborhood and make certain that the vibrancy of the community does not fade in the years and decades to come. Finally, and most importantly, **engaging the neighborhood residents in the planning process of their neighborhoods** will be critical to implementing this Plan and reaching the goals and vision outlined herein. A strong partnership and collaborative efforts between Pender County and the area residents are key to ensuring Maple Hill continues to be a thriving and successful community.

Section VII. Maple Hill Action Plan

A key aspect of this Plan is how the goals will be effectuated after it is adopted. This Section, the Maple Hill Action Plan, recommends implementation steps that the County, neighborhood residents, and other stakeholders can take to implement the goals outlined earlier, as well as a timeframe in which the implementation may take place. It is important to note that the following action steps and implementation schedule are *recommendations based on available resources*. Planning is an ongoing process, and County Staff will work with the neighborhood to periodically review, revise, and prioritize these actions as necessary.

The Tables that follow list the recommended actions, the type of action it is, the lead agency(ies) or entity(ies) responsible for the action, and the relative priority of the action. More specifically:

- “Action” identifies the implementation step that may be taken to accomplish the goal and meet the challenges described in this Plan.
- “Action Type” includes the following categories:
 - ✓ **Program** – which identifies actions that require the development or enhancement of existing programs for the community;
 - ✓ **Policy** – which identifies a governmental course of action to be implemented or evaluated;
 - ✓ **Capital Improvement** – which identifies public improvements needed for services or facilities; and
 - ✓ **Coordination and Partnership** – which identifies opportunities to establish relationships with various stakeholders to accomplish the stated action.
- “Lead Agency(ies)” identifies the major stakeholder(s) in charge of the action and includes entities such as Pender County Board of Commissioners, Pender County Planning Board, Pender County Planning Staff, County Departments, Community Organizations, and Area Residents.
- “Priority” organizes the actions into a *rough* time line for their implementation. The definition of the priorities is as follows:
 - ✓ **Ongoing** – means actions without a specific time-frame;
 - ✓ **Short-Term** – means actions that could be undertaken immediately or within the next 1-3 years;
 - ✓ **Medium-Term** – means actions that could be undertaken within 3-7 years of adoption; and
 - ✓ **Long-Term** – means actions that could be undertaken beyond the next 7 years.

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Land Use and Economic Development

Summary: Maple Hill residents enjoy their rural lifestyles but more commercial and industrial uses are desired in targeted areas. Emphasis is on increasing the number of economic development opportunities and services in Maple Hill and improving the vibrancy and vitality of the community.

		Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority
GOAL 1: Focus on long-term economic sustainability, job creation, and business opportunities through economic development efforts and land use policies that encourage appropriate non-residential investment in environmentally viable sites.	1.1	Explore the need to amend the Future Land Use map in the County's Comprehensive Plan to accomplish the economic development goals and policies in the Plan, including encouraging more non-residential development, along the targeted Hwy 50 and Hwy 53 corridors.	Policy	Planning Dept., Planning Board	Short term
	1.2	Consider the need to rezone targeted areas of the neighborhood or the creation of a neighborhood overlay district to accomplish the economic development goals and policies in the Plan, including encouraging more non-residential development, along the targeted Hwy 50 and Hwy 53 corridors.	Policy	Planning Dept., Board of Commissioners	Medium term
	1.3	Explore the possibility of partnering with community-based organizations and workforce training organizations to locate – or have satellite offices locate – in Maple Hill.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., Community Organizations	Ongoing
GOAL 2: Support neighborhood commercial and retail opportunities with		Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority
	2.1	Identify incentives for development of local businesses along targeted corridors in non-flood-prone areas within the neighborhood (focusing on the Hwy 50 and Hwy 53 corridors).	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents	Long term
	2.2	Ensure priority for water and wastewater capacity	Policy	Board of	Long term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps				
Land Use and Economic Development				
policies and infrastructure improvements that enhance neighborhood stability and further community revitalization.		allocation is given to non-residential uses to promote the establishment and development of commercial uses, especially along the Highway 50 and Highway 53 corridors.		Commissioners, Planning Board, Planning Dept.
	2.3	Encourage the Low Impact Development standards in the current UDO and promote other Best Management Practices to preserve and promote the rural landscape, open space, and natural resources when development does occur in the neighborhood.	Policy	Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, Planning Dept. Ongoing
GOAL 3: Proactively and cooperatively protect existing development in environmentally sensitive areas (such as flood hazard areas) and endeavor to make development resilient to damage from flooding, wind, and other effects of natural disasters.	Action		Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)
	3.1	Ensure the community is aware of who to contact for drainage/flooding issues within NC DOT-maintained street and road rights-of-way through information distribution and education.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents Ongoing
	3.2	Continue to work with homeowners to upgrade and improve old septic and well infrastructure and make needed structural improvements.	Policy	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments Long term
	3.3	Explore opportunities to reinstate a beaver dam maintenance/removal program.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments Medium term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Housing

Summary: With respect to housing, efforts should focus on the neighborhood’s need for housing improvements, enhancements to the neighborhood’s appearance, and increasing home ownership.

	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
<p>GOAL 1: Stimulate and attract residential investment to help decrease the number of vacancies in the Maple Hill area.</p>	1.1	Explore opportunities to provide coordinated technical and financial assistance to persons interested in buying or improving a home.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	1.2	Assist interested homebuyers in the Maple Hill area by expanding existing home buying educational programs or creating new programs to address unmet needs.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	1.3	Encourage relevant organizations to make homeownership needs in the neighborhood a priority.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Ongoing
	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
<p>GOAL 2: Increase funding, volunteer, and charitable opportunities for housing improvements, with an emphasis on assistance for vulnerable populations.</p>	2.1	Increase awareness of home improvement assistance programs by developing a clearinghouse of information for interested homeowners, especially for seniors.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	2.2	Explore opportunities to provide coordinated technical and financial assistance to persons interested in the FEMA buyout program.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Medium term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps					
Housing					
	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
GOAL 3: Enhance the visual character of the neighborhood in order to preserve and heighten community charm and pride.	3.1	Continue code enforcement efforts regarding the storing of junked cars, and trash/debris on lots within the neighborhood.	Policy	Planning Dept., County Departments, Area Residents	Ongoing
	3.2	Educate area residents on appropriate UDO provisions and relevant zoning and building provisions regarding upkeep of lots and structures.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents,	Ongoing

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Transportation

Summary: Like many areas in Pender County, Maple Hill residents are heavily dependent on automobiles for transportation, and the lack of retail and health services in close proximity to the neighborhood mean residents must commute to get the services they need. Therefore, neighborhood goals center on ways to improve transportation options and availability, particularly for vulnerable populations.

	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
GOAL 1: Increase the number of transportation services and options in Maple Hill in order to link the residents to jobs, health care, and other local services.	1.1	Explore the possibility of extending a bus route from NC 53 to the Onslow County line, and providing a park and ride lot at this location.	Coordination and Partnerships	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	1.2	Explore the possibility of partnering with Pender County Adult Services to coordinate transportation stops and services between PAS and WAVE Transit and connect in Castle Hayne.	Coordination and Partnerships	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
GOAL 2: Build capacity and ridership on the neighborhood's existing transportation networks.		Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority
	2.1	Increase awareness of the transportation services available in the area by educating residents on the available options, and identify the reasons, if any, why existing services might be currently underutilized.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, Community Organizations	Short term
2.2	Coordinate with the transportation service providers available in Pender County to encourage ridership and coordinate programming opportunities.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, Community Organizations	Medium term	
		Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority
	3.1	Consider revising the UDO to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> add requirements for sidewalks and multi-use paths/trails; 	Policy	Planning Dept., Planning Board, Board of	Long term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps				
Transportation				
<p>GOAL 3:</p> <p>Expand the network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways to promote more active transportation options for residents.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · improve streetscapes ; · increase the requirements for subdivisions to be more “walkable” and bicycle friendly in the RP, RA, MH, and PD zoning districts; and · adopt a complete streets standard. 		Commissioners
	3.2	Continue to explore grant and other funding opportunities to fund bicycle and pedestrian pathways.	Program	Planning Dept. and County Departments

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Services and Utilities

Summary: Increasing and improving the limited amount of infrastructure in the neighborhood, including water, sewer and internet, as well as introducing new educational, social, and vocational programming to residents, are important priorities in this topic area.

		Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority
<p>GOAL 1:</p> <p>Encourage the development of infrastructure to attract new, local programs and businesses that provide jobs and needed services.</p>	1.1	Explore the feasibility of extending water and wastewater utility services from Pender County Utilities or through a potential partnership with neighboring service providers to encourage non-residential development in targeted locations.	Coordination and Partnerships / Capital Improvement	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Long term
	1.2	Collaborate with internet service providers and community stakeholder to improve broadband access in the area.	Coordination and Partnerships / Capital Improvement	Planning Dept., Area Residents, Community Organizations	Medium term
	1.3	Consider offsite wastewater systems or package wastewater systems to improve future wastewater infrastructure and improve public health.	Coordination and Partnerships / Capital Improvement	Planning Dept. and County Departments	Long term
<p>GOAL 2:</p> <p>Create and improve opportunities for community residents to have access to educational and vocational resources.</p>	2.1	Coordinate with Pender County Library to create opportunities for community residents to have access to typical library resources including books, reference and learning materials, and computers. This may be achieved by establishing a mobile library, book sharing program, and/or establishing a library facility in the community.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Long term
	2.2	Explore opportunities that may coordinate historical preservation with library development, such as grants and programs to revitalize significant historical landmarks that could also host library	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community	Medium term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps				
Services and Utilities				
		resources.		Organizations
	2.3	Explore opportunities to reestablish Head Start and pre-kindergarten programs and ensure that community residents are aware of program availability.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Area Residents, County Departments, Community Organizations Long term
GOAL 3: Create an active and vibrant community where residents feel they are safe.		Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)
	3.1	Explore ways to reduce insurance ratings for fire suppression in the Maple Hill Community.	Program	County Departments, Community Organizations. Long term
	3.2	Improve the relationship between the community and the Sheriff's Office through activities such as a finger printing day, a Sheriff's Office exhibit at local events, Sheriff's Office-led workshops for safety.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents County Departments Short term
	3.3	Work with the Sheriff's office to create a greater Police presence in the neighborhood; utilizing the Resource Center as a potential base of operations.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Area Residents, Planning Dept., County Departments Short term
	3.4	Establish a "Community Watch Group."	Program	Area Resident and County Departments Medium term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Parks and Recreation

Summary: Few opportunities exist for recreation in Maple Hill, and with the health of the community being a priority, County stakeholders and neighborhood residents would like to see a focus placed on exploring new ways to promote active living and healthy eating.

	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
<p>GOAL 1:</p> <p>Increase the number of opportunities for active recreation in the neighborhood.</p>	1.1	Explore the idea of building a Maple Hill Community Park, which would be a new 20 to 75 acre county managed facility in the Maple Hill area.	Capital Improvement	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments	Long term
	1.2	Consider improving the Maple Hill Resource Center property by revitalizing the current amenities and adding others, such as picnic areas and shelters, and outdoor lighting.	Coordination and Partnerships	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	1.3	Identify needed activities and programs for neighborhood youth that are potentially viable in the Maple Hill neighborhood.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments	Short term
	1.4	Identify sites within the neighborhood that could serve as tot lots, mini parks, or other smaller recreational sites, such as the FEMA buyout properties already owned by the County. Create a plan to develop parks at potential sites.	Program / Capital Improvement	Planning Dept., County Departments, Community Organizations	Medium term
	1.5	Explore the possibility of events and programming that may be feasible within the game lands, such as a collaborative effort to host a large marathon, biathlon, or triathlon event.	Coordination and Partnerships	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments, Community Organizations	Long term
	1.6	Explore the potential for recreational development and management at Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area.	Coordination and Partnerships	County Departments and Community Organizations	Long term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Parks and Recreation

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps					
Parks and Recreation					
	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
<p>GOAL 2: Promote healthy eating in the Maple Hill community.</p>	2.1	Identify healthy eating programming that may be made available to residents in the neighborhood.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Depts.	Short term
	2.2	Explore the idea of creating a community garden, perhaps using Seven Oaks as a Pilot Project.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments	Short term
	2.3	Explore the idea of allowing the growing and sale of vegetables as allowable home or cottage occupation activities in the UDO.	Policy	Planning Dept., Board of Commissioners	Short term
	2.4	Explore the possibility of working with regional area food stores or other commercial businesses that the community frequently visits to sell locally grown food on consignment.	Coordination and Partnerships / Program	Planning Dept., County Depts., Community Organizations	Medium term
	2.5	Consider relaxing the standards (including location) for farm stand suitability locations, thus allowing them to locate in Maple Hill.	Policy	Planning Dept., Board of Commissioners	Short term
<p>GOAL 3: Increase the amount of true open space in the neighborhood.</p>	3.1	Consider revising the UDO to amend the open space standards to ensure reasonable and quantifiable areas of open space will be provided when land is subdivided and developed.	Policy	Planning Dept., Board of Commissioners	Short term
	3.2	Eliminate barriers in the UDO to the creation of open space areas when land is subdivided or developed	Policy	Planning Dept., Board of Commissioners	Short term

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps

Community Heritage and Sense of Place

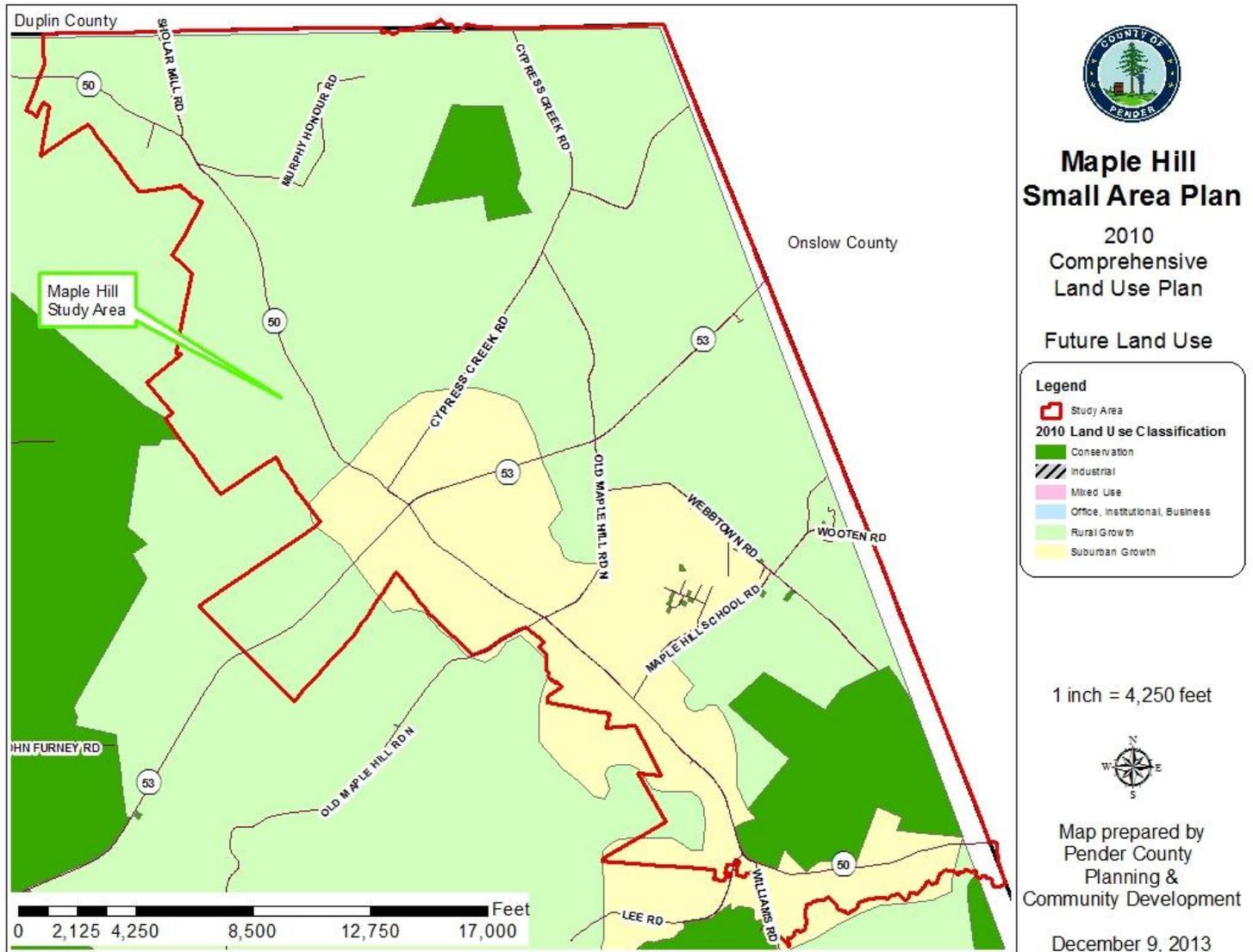
Summary: .In order to preserve and maintain the tremendous neighborhood assets already existing in the Maple Hill community, residents would like to see historic preservation efforts that focus on preserving the past, as well as efforts to help neighborhood identity, and resident engagement, in order to continue their proud tradition moving forward.

	Action		Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority
GOAL 1: Strengthen the community's values and preserve Maple Hill's heritage and history by examining opportunities to conserve and/or preserve buildings.	1.1	Explore partnership efforts to obtain preservation grants for the Maple Hill area, focusing on the old Rosenwald school buildings.	Coordination and Partnerships	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	1.2	Support efforts to create a formal Historical Society in order to preserve, maintain, and enhance historical resources within the area.	Program	Planning Dept., Board of Commissioners, Area Residents	Short term
GOAL 2: Continue to build community character and establish and enhance a sense of place in Maple Hill by increasing the number of public engagement and community involvement opportunities.	2.1	Explore opportunities for property acquisition, site planning and design, construction, implementation, and operation of a community center to serve as a focal point for the Maple Hill area.	Program / Capital Investment	Planning Dept., County Departments, Area Residents,	Medium term
	2.2	Ensure that the natural resources within the Maple Hill study area are preserved, maintained, and enhanced as future development occurs.	Policy	Planning Dept., Planning Board., Area Residents	Ongoing

Maple Hill Planning Goals and Action Steps					
Community Heritage and Sense of Place					
	Action	Action Type	Lead Agency(ies)	Priority	
GOAL 3: Actively engage residents and other stakeholders in the planning and management of their neighborhoods.	3.1	Explore ways to engage community stakeholders in activities that promote neighborhood management and involvement.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments, Community Organizations	Short term
	3.2	Explore civic, cultural, and recreational programming opportunities that would interest neighborhood residents.	Program	Planning Dept., Area Residents, County Departments, Community Organizations	Ongoing

Section VIII. Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map serves as the main guide for future development and is to be used in conjunction with the Plan’s policies and goals in determining future land use decisions. The Future Land Use Map for the Maple Hill study area is based on the adopted 2010 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Based on the goals of this Small Area Plan, amending the map may be necessary to reflect the land use and economic development goals outlined herein.



Section IX. References

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Section X. Appendix A – Maps of the Maple Hill Study Area

This section includes the following maps for the Maple Hill Small Area Plan:

- ❖ **MAPLE HILL STUDY AREA – AERIAL**
- ❖ **MAPLE HILL STUDY AREA**
- ❖ **CURRENT MAPLE HILL ZONING AND ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS**
- ❖ **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- ❖ **FLOODPLAIN MAPS**
- ❖ **EXISTING FEMA BUYOUT PROPERTIES IN MAPLE HILL**