

Issue 2: Infrastructure and Community Services

Topic A: Infrastructure and Community Services - Water and Sewer

Water and sewer improvements are necessary for property to be developed to urban densities. Extensions of water and sewer lines significantly affect the timing and density of development and it is imperative that land use and utility extensions be coordinated in order to achieve the desired land use patterns identified in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Through utility planning, development required to use public water and sewer will occur in a more orderly pattern adjacent to existing developed areas.

Utility extension policies directly impact the cost, timing and spatial distribution of development. Utility extension policies should address:

- ▶ Contribution a developer must make for the extension;
- ▶ Location, alignment and capacity of facilities to be extended;
- ▶ Potential and process for recouping costs for providing excess capacity;
- ▶ Areas where facilities may or may not be extended; and
- ▶ Timing of facility extensions.

The conditions under which utilities may or must be extended to a project should be consistent with comprehensive plan policies discouraging sprawl, premature subdivision, conversion of agriculturally viable land and inefficient infrastructure investments. The coordination of utility extension and land use policies is critical to avoid creating incentives for growth that are inconsistent with the land use plan or creating disincentives for desired growth.

Topic D: Infrastructure and Community Services - Libraries

The Pender County Public Library system is presently developing a building program to address existing and future library facility needs and to seek funding necessary to implement a countywide building program. The plan includes a three phase expansion plan over a 20-year period. The public library system has identified three 7-mile boundary search areas for potential future library branches as shown on the Future Public Facilities Map.

The Plan recognizes that the best opportunity for a partnership with a developer for land donation for a regional library facility will probably be in the southwestern portion of the County. The Plan recommends that the County consider offering a density credit or bonus to encourage developers to support the library capital building program through a site donation or reservation.

Issue 3: Preferred Development Pattern / Community Appearance

Preferred Development Patterns Goal 3A.1

Develop a preferred growth pattern that includes traditional suburban communities but also allows for higher density residential development and for innovative mixed-use developments to encourage more compact, sustainable growth patterns.

Topic B: Community Design and Appearance

Community established design standards can be used to ensure that new development is compatible with existing and planned development. Design standards shape the location, scale and appearance of development – regulating height, bulk, setbacks,

landscaping, buffering, building materials and/or architectural features. Design standards may be used to maintain the rural, historic, or other established character of an area. Performance-based design standards may be used to allow greater intensity of development in exchange for increased design amenities. Standards can be either mandatory standards or recommended guidelines.

Community design standards should address all types of land uses allowed within the County – residential, office, commercial and industrial uses. Specific standards for each zoning district should be included in the UDO.

Benefits include:

- ▶ Design standards can help soften the visual impacts of new development.
- ▶ Regulations can be tailored to the individual characteristics of the community.

Limitations include:

- ▶ Heightened regulations add a layer of complexity and cost to the development review process.
- ▶ Additional requirements can increase the cost of development.

Another key component in protecting community character and aesthetics is to provide for cluster development options. Cluster development standards allow for adjustments in the location and/or type of dwelling units and/or non-residential lots/units on a site.

The technique is used to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural lands and upland sites for recreation / open space or to eliminate the need to develop portions of sites that, owing to wetlands, tree cover, or other factors, would more appropriately remain undeveloped. When applying cluster development standards:

- ▶ Reserve a combination of environmentally sensitive areas and upland sites to provide usable, consolidated open space;
- ▶ Density/intensity bonuses may be provided to encourage clustering;
- ▶ Clustering may be mandatory or voluntary; and
- ▶ Balance of property must be reserved for specified uses, as approved by County.

Benefits include:

- ▶ Allows for flexibility in design to protect natural resource areas.
- ▶ Can result in preservation of substantial amounts of open space while not reducing densities.
- ▶ Construction and infrastructure costs are reduced.

Limitations include:

- ▶ If not well-designed and developed, cluster development can result in fragmented open space that makes agricultural uses difficult.
- ▶ Requires higher level of review to determine appropriate and feasible development layouts.
- ▶ Clustering is not often a popular option with developers.
- ▶ Long-term management of common open space may become problematic for homeowners.

Coastal Pender Goal 4A.1

The primary goal of the Coastal Pender Small Area Plan is to direct higher density residential and mixed use growth toward the Scotts Hill area, closer to the New Hanover/ Wilmington metro area. Development can be expected to continue in the Hampstead community but growth is to be focused more towards the southeastern edge of the Coastal Pender area. Coordinating future

growth with the adjacent local governments of Surf City to the north and New Hanover County to the south and east are of prime importance.

Large scale developments should expect to be supported by public utilities and closely evaluated through coordinated development plan review. Commercial, office and mixed used infill, re-development of existing sites and development of new sites are expected to continue as market forces permit along the US Highway 17 corridor in Hampstead.

New land use proposals and approvals should closely consider the status of future transportation projects such as the US Highway 17 / Hampstead Bypass. Development should be encouraged and/or required to protect and support the integrity of historical and cultural sites within the area.

Policy 4A.1.1 Direct and encourage future high density residential and mixed use planned development toward the Scotts Hill area. Growth in this area should be supported by public utilities in order to achieve higher densities and more compact development. Larger tracts of land should be required to submit master plans that indicate how development will be coordinated both on site and with existing or future development on adjacent properties.

Rocky Point Goal 4B.1

The primary goal of the Rocky Point Small Area Plan is to accommodate higher density mixed use growth in and around the I-40 / US 117 and NC 210 intersections. Coordinating future growth with already planned projects within the area will be of prime importance. Large scale developments should expect to be supported by public utilities and closely evaluated through coordinated development plan review. Commercial, office and mixed used infill is expected to occur along the major highway corridors, particularly close to major intersections.

Policy 4B.1.2 Focus higher density residential and other mixed use development toward existing County facilities such as Heidi Trask High School and other developing areas being served by public water and sewer.

Policy 5A.1.5 Provide incentives such as density bonuses to developers that offer established affordable/workforce housing programs through community land trusts such as the Cape Fear Housing Community Land Trust.

Rural Growth Areas

Rural Growth areas are intended to protect agricultural and forestry operations that are a major part of the County's economic base and that are key to preservation of the County's rural landscape. Major job-creating activities that are compatible with farms, forestry and very low-density development are appropriate.

Uses that would typically be allowed in Rural Growth areas include very low-density residential development (single-family site-built, modular, and manufactured homes) on one acre or greater size lots; agriculture, forestry, churches; very limited nonresidential uses - commercial, office, or public/institutional - meeting locational criteria. Locational criteria for non-residential uses in Rural Growth areas include frontage and access to a major State highway or

secondary road, location at a major rural intersection, proximity to similar existing non-residential uses, and spatial separation from non-compatible uses such as existing residential development.

Suburban Growth

The Suburban Growth land use classification identifies those areas of Pender County where significant residential growth is expected to occur within the planning horizon. Areas designated as Suburban Growth are located primarily adjacent to municipal planning jurisdictions and within or near high growth, unincorporated areas of the County, i.e., Hampstead/Scotts Hill, Rocky Point, and portions of US 421 South. Suburban Growth designates areas where public water and public sewer are available or are planned in the near future.

Achievable residential densities would be dependent on the type and level of public services that are available. Higher density residential development would be supported where both public water and sewer are available, provided adequate buffers and design features can minimize impacts on neighboring lower density residential properties.

Uses that would typically be allowed in Suburban Growth areas include medium-high density residential (single-family site-built and modular homes); limited non-residential uses - commercial, office, or public/institutional - meeting locational criteria. Locational criteria for non-residential uses include frontage and access to a major State highway or secondary road, location at a major intersection, proximity to similar uses, and spatial separation from non-compatible uses such as existing residential development.

As residential development increases in suburban areas, designation of large tracts for significant economic development projects will become more difficult because fewer locations will exist that have the characteristics of an attractive economic development site, particularly in terms of proximity to existing residential areas. It is noted that designation as a Suburban Growth area does not preclude the development of economic development sites considered important to the economic sustainability of Pender County.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use land use classification designates locations where a mixture of higher density/intensity uses is to be encouraged. Mixed Use areas should be characterized by physically and aesthetically unified developments containing a mixture of commercial, office, institutional, and high- and medium-density residential uses, arranged in a walkable, compact, pedestrian and transit friendly manner

Mixed Use areas are intended to help reduce sprawl by concentrating a mix of uses in convenient locations; by promoting an efficient sustainable pattern of land uses, and by providing most of the goods and services needed by residents in a coordinated, concentrated manner. Mixed Use areas are intended to reduce the number and length of auto trips by placing higher-density housing close to shopping and employment center. They also should function to improve the quality of life for residents living in higher density housing by placing daily conveniences, shops, and

employment within walking distance; the road network within Mixed Use areas should be designed to ensure that adjacent residential areas will have direct access to the non-residential portions of the mixed use center in lieu of entering and exiting through thoroughfares and/or collector streets. Developments should provide or contribute to a pedestrian and road network that connects nonresidential and existing residential uses (multi-family and single-family) developments. Mixed Use areas are designated within the Coastal Pender and Rocky Point Small Area Plans.