1996 CAMA Land Use Plan

Town of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Adopted May 8, 1997

Town of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

1996 CAMA LAND USE PLAN

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1. Executive Summary

This executive summary consists of three parts:

1.1 Summary of Local Land Use Issues
A summary of some of the salient issues being faced by the Town at the present time and anticipated to be an on-going concern over the coming months or years.

1.2 Policy Statements
The Town's officially adopted positions and statements of principle concerning growth and development issues at Wrightsville Beach.

1.3 The Land Classification System
A method for translating the Town's growth and development policies to specific parts of the community, recognizing that not all parts of the Town are alike.

Each element of the Executive Summary will now be presented in turn.

1.1 Summary of Local Land Use Issues

Unlike many other communities, which can grow and expand their borders, the Town of Wrightsville Beach has a finite land base within which to operate. For all intents and purposes, the Town is essentially developed. As Wrightsville Beach approaches the year 2000, however, the Town is entering a significant new *redevelopment* phase which promises to be no less significant, in terms of its potential impact, than the initial development of the community. This land use plan addresses several emerging development trends at Wrightsville Beach, which the reader will observe, are interrelated. Among the most critical issues facing the community today are:

- **The Advent of the Massive Single Family Residence.**
Some owners of older beach cottages are seeking to "max out" the development potential allowed on their lot under the Town's zoning ordinance. As the value of land at Wrightsville Beach has continued to escalate during the 1970's, 80's and 90's, these older era beach cottages are being replaced with larger and more massive residential structures. These new structures are being built out to the maximum building set backs and building heights allowed under the ordinance. They are oftentimes not compatible in terms of building scale and height with nearby structures. They also place demands on municipal services far greater than the much smaller "beach cottages' they replace. Traffic generated, parking demand created, fire protection needed, solid waste produced, water consumed, and sewage volumes generated may all be dramatically increased by these very large structures. Stormwater runoff into the sound is also increased by the larger building footprints and areas of impervious surface. This plan recommends that all structures, regardless of their single family or multi-family label, be treated by Town ordinances according to their anticipated impacts on the neighborhood in which they locate and on the service demands they create.

- **Continued Pressure for Multi-Family Residential**
Even with the advent of massive single family structures, demand for higher density development on ever more expensive real estate is pushing continued pressure for more multi-family development. For many of the same reasons outlined above (traffic, parking, water consumption, solid waste disposal, and storm water runoff, etc.) the Town wishes to discourage additional multi-family development at Wrightsville Beach.

- **The Walling Off of the Waterfront**
As structures grow ever larger to consume the permissible building envelope, views to the water, which were once available at regular intervals throughout the island community, are gradually disappearing. A casual walk or bike ride down many streets at Wrightsville Beach no longer yield the frequent glimpses of the sound or waterway. Instead, the walker is more apt to see the flat

door of an enclosed garage or a privacy fence walling off the side yard between two structures. This plan seeks to preserve views and vistas to the water whenever possible and discourages the construction of structures (wall to wall on a lot) which would contribute to the further visual walling off of the water's edge.

- **Potential loss of the community's commercial services base, including the downtown area.**
  Current development pressures are working toward the displacement of the Town's existing commercial services base by residential development. There are two primary factors working together to create this displacement pressure. First, as the Wilmington-New Hanover urban area has expanded rapidly eastward during the 1980' and 90's, many of the Town's citizens have elected to reside at Wrightsville Beach but work and shop elsewhere in the County. As a result, demand for residential units at Wrightsville Beach is outstripping demand for virtually every other form of development, including commercial. Second, the emergence of the Wrightsville Sound area as a commercial service center for the eastern side of the County has provided a new, relatively convenient service base for Wrightsville Beach residents and visitors. Stores and services on the mainland are typically larger and have larger inventories. They may also have lower ground rents, on average, than businesses at the beach.

These emerging trends are not intended, by any means, to represent the full range of issues confronting the Town of Wrightsville Beach. They are indicative, however, of a community caught in a wave of rapid change, brought about by tremendous regional growth, and heightened by enormous demand for resort living in the midst of an otherwise mainstream urban area. The growth management decisions necessary to positively direct this change are not monumental, but they will require deliberate, focused attention and many hard decisions. The policies which follow are intended to help guide those decisions.

1.2 Policy Statements

OVERALL COMMUNITY VISION

Policy 8.0 General Vision Policy for Next Ten Years
We, the residents, business, & property owners of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, shall seek to maintain and enhance our community as one of the finest family oriented beach towns on the east coast of the United States. To do so will require diligence in working to retain the small town character and quality of the natural and man-made environment that has become the basis for our quality of life at Wrightsville Beach, and which makes our community such a desirable place for both visitors and residents alike.

RESOURCE PROTECTION POLICIES

Policy 8.1.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Resource Protection
The natural and scenic resources of Wrightsville Beach are the reason for our existence and attractiveness as a community, for the value of our properties, and for the quality of our lives. It shall be the policy of Town to take no action nor approve any action, in singular or cumulative effect, which would jeopardize the long term viability of our natural and scenic resources. Furthermore, actions should have the effect of protecting and enhancing the quality of such resources whenever possible.

Policy 8.1.1 A Appropriate, Corrective Drainage Improvements
Development will not be allowed where poor drainage or seasonal flooding exists unless appropriate corrective improvements are to be completed as part of the project. Appropriate corrective improvements shall be defined as those which solve the drainage problem without increasing stormwater runoff on adjacent properties or in area waters, whether directly or indirectly.

Policy 8.1.1 B Application of Federal, State, and Local Controls
Allowable land uses in areas posing physical constraints should be only those approved through, where applicable, the Division of Coastal Management (CAMA), the Army Corps of Engineers "404" permitting processes, the Town's Zoning and Pierhead Line Ordinances, and the Town Dune Maintenance and Protection Plan.

Policy 8.1.1 C Development in the 100 Year Floodplain
Development shall be permissible in the 100-year flood zone, provided that all new construction and substantial improvements comply strictly with CAMA regulations and the Town's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

Policy 8.1.2 Areas Of Environmental Concern
The Town will support and enforce, through its CAMA Minor Permitting capacity, the State policies and permitted uses in the Areas of Environmental Concern (AEC's). Such uses shall be in accord with the general use standards for coastal wetlands, estuarine waters, estuarine shorelines, and public trust areas as stated in 15A NCAC Subchapter 7H.

Policy 8.1.2 A Coastal Wetlands
Due to the critical role that wetlands play in protecting the quality of estuarine waters and in providing habitat for fish and wildlife, the Town strongly supports the designation and preservation of all remaining coastal wetlands. Acceptable land uses may include utility easements, fishing piers, and docks. Examples of uses NOT permitted include restaurants, businesses, residences, apartments, motels, hotels, parking lots, private roads, and highways.

Policy 8.1.2 B Estuarine Waters
(1) Appropriate uses within estuarine waters may include simple access channels, structures which prevent erosion, navigational channels, private boat docks, marinas, piers, and mooring pilings. Expansion or construction of new marinas is discouraged. Piers and docks for non-water dependent commercial uses are also discouraged.
(2) Any development or activity which will profoundly and adversely affect coastal and estuarine waters will not be allowed. In the design, construction and operation of water dependent structures, efforts must be made to mitigate negative effects on water quality and fish habitat, as determined by NCAC 15A Subchapter 7H and the Coastal Resources Commission. The developer and/or owner will bear the cost of any required mitigation.

Policy 8.1.2 C Public Trust Areas
(1) Any use which significantly interferes with the public right of navigation or other public trust rights shall be strongly discouraged. Projects which would directly or indirectly block or impair existing navigational channels, increase shoreline erosion, deposit spoils below mean high water, cause adverse water circulation patterns, violate water quality standards, or cause degradation of shellfish waters shall be prohibited.
(2) The Town shall seek to ensure the responsible use of jet skis and other similar "personal" watercraft within the public trust waters of Wrightsville Beach. Responsible use shall mean controlled, predictable movements similar to other powered watercraft while in navigation channels, marinas, and other regularly trafficked areas, and their prohibition in marshes and other shallow water estuaries, where damage to the resource is likely.
(3) CAMA standards designed to limit the length of docks and piers as they project into public trust waters shall be considered the minimum standards, with the Town reserving the right to be more restrictive where public trust waters use and environmental protection issues warrant.

Policy 8.1.2 D Estuarine Shorelines
Marina development or expansion is discouraged along estuarine shorelines. However, residential, recreational, research and educational, and commercial land uses are all appropriate types of use along the estuarine shoreline, provided that all standards of NCAC 15 Subchapter 7H relevant to estuarine shoreline AEC's are met, and that the proposed use is consistent with policies set forth in this Plan.

Policy 8.1.2 E Ocean Hazard Areas
(1) The Town supports state policies for ocean hazard areas as set forth in Chapter 15A, Subchapter 7H of the state CAMA regulations. Suitable land uses in ocean hazard areas include ocean shoreline erosion control activities and dune establishment and stabilization. Residential, commercial, and recreational land uses and parking lots for beach access are also acceptable types of use in ocean hazard areas, provided that they meet all general and specific use standards of 15A: 7H.
(2) The Town supports the policies and regulations of State and Federal permitting agencies concerning the development of ocean piers, and shall encourage the proper maintenance and safety of such piers.

Policy 8.1.3 Turtle Nesting Areas
The Town shall avoid undertaking any activity or approving of any activity which would destroy remaining habitat for loggerhead turtle nesting.

Policy 8.1.4 A Other Wetlands
The Town supports the designation and preservation of all wetlands.

POLICY 8.1.4 B Maritime Forests and Tree Cover
Tree cover at Wrightsville Beach, whether maritime or otherwise, is a highly valued asset. The Town encourages efforts to preserve existing tree cover in new development and redevelopment.

Policy 8.1.4 C Outstanding Resource Water Areas
The Town supports and encourages the designation and preservation of Outstanding Resource Waters. The Town promotes surface water quality through its storm drainage and stormwater runoff policies.

Policy 8.1.4 D Shellfishing Waters
The Town supports and encourages the activities of the State's Shellfish Management Program. The Town promotes estuarine water quality through its storm drainage planning and stormwater runoff policies.

Policy 8.1.4 E Water Supply Areas and Other Waters with Special Values
The Town encourages regional efforts to protect the water quality of the Castle Hayne aquifer and the Cape Fear River as sources of potable water.

Policy 8.1.4 F Cultural and Historic Resources
The Town encourages the preservation of its older, potentially historic structures, both commercial and residential.

Policy 8.1.5 Protection Of Potable Water Supply
The Town's groundwater resources shall be conserved for longevity through proper management of its system of wells, and by the encouragement of water conservation practices, including measures which can be taken in construction of all new structures.

Policy 8.1.6 Package Sewage Treatment Plants
All new developments are required to connect to the Town's central sewer system. Package sewage treatment plants and septic systems are not allowed.

Policy 8.1.7 Storm Water Runoff
The Town encourages the use of "best management practices" to minimize the release of pollutants to coastal waters through stormwater runoff. Examples include using pervious or semi-pervious materials, such as turfstone or gravel for driveways and walks, retaining natural vegetation along marsh and waterfront areas to retain its natural filtering properties, and allowing stormwater to percolate into the ground rather than discharging it directly to coastal waters. (Note: As policy, the Town will continue to require that the first 4" of rainwater in a 24 hour period be retained on site for all new developments.)

Policy 8.1.8 A Marinas, Wetslips
The Town will discourage the expansion and/or intensification of existing marinas and the development of additional marinas, including upland marinas in excavated basins.

Policy 8.1.8 B Floating Home Development
Due to the limited amount of public trust waters surrounding Wrightsville Beach and the heavy use of those waters by the public, the Town shall not allow the effective "permanent consumption" of public trust waters by floating homes.

Policy 8.1.8 C Moorings and Mooring Fields
Additional freestanding moorings of any kind shall not be allowed within the public trust waters of Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.1.8 D Dry Stack Storage
While dry storage of boats by individual owners is preferred over wet slip storage, the Town shall discourage the expansion and development of additional dry stack storage facilities.

Policy 8.1.8 E Commercial Fishing Dockage
Commercial fisheries vessel dockage at currently used commercial facilities along the soundside waterfront is acceptable.

Policy 8.1.8 F Vessels for Hire, Charter Boats and Cruise Ship Dockage
Vessels for hire and charter boats/cruise ships shall only be allowed in conjunction with existing marinas and shall not cause an expansion in the amount of surface water consumed or parking demand generated. Smaller charter and cruise ships shall be preferred over larger.

Policy 8.1.9 Industrial Impacts On Fragile Areas
Industrial development of any kind is incompatible with the overall land use pattern, economy, and quality of life at Wrightsville Beach. Therefore, no impact on fragile areas is expected nor will it be allowed.

Policy 8.1.10 Development Of Sound And Estuarine System Islands
All estuarine sound islands and spoil islands are subject to conservation (P-I) provisions. The Town also supports all county and state efforts to preserve Masonboro Island.

Policy 8.1.11 Development Within Areas That Might Be Susceptible To Sea Level Rise
The Town will encourage appropriate agencies of the State and Federal government to monitor research on sea level rise and its theoretical effect on coastal areas. The Town will consider any state and federal policies formulated prior to formulating specific policies regarding sea level rise; specifically, development within areas up to 5 feet above sea level which may be susceptible to sea level rise and wetland loss.

Policy 8.1.12 Upland Excavation For Marina Basins
The Town will discourage the expansion of existing marinas and the development of additional marinas, including upland marinas in excavated basins.

Policy 8.1.13 Marsh Damage From Bulkhead Installation
The Town urges proper maintenance of existing bulkheads and seawalls for health, safety and aesthetic reasons. The Town shall not allow marshes or beach areas to be damaged by the installation of new bulkheads, groins or seawalls.

Policy 8.1.14 Water Quality Problems and Management Measures
The Town shall continue to seek improved marina management and stormwater runoff standards which will protect and enhance the water quality of the estuarine system.

RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Policy 8.2.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Resource Production and Management
Wrightsville Beach is located in the midst of one of the most biologically productive ecosystems on earth—estuarine waters and marshes. The Town shall take no action nor approve of any action which would seriously harm the long term viability and productivity of this ecosystem.

Policy 8.2.1 Productive Agricultural Lands (Not applicable)

Policy 8.2.2 Commercial Forest Lands (Not applicable)

Policy 8.2.3 Mineral Production Areas—Existing and Potential
Mineral production and extraction activities of any kind shall not be permitted within the planning jurisdiction of Wrightsville Beach. This shall not preclude removal of sand deposits for beach nourishment.

Policy 8.2.4 Fisheries Resources (Commercial and Recreational)
(1) The Town supports projects which increase productivity of coastal and estuarine waters. Projects such as oyster reseeding programs and properly constructed artificial reef construction will be supported in the future.
(2) The Town supports the "Big Sweep" beach cleanup program and all other similar efforts to enhance the cleanliness of the natural environment.
(3) The Town supports the NC Division of Marine Fisheries and the Division of Coastal Management in their development of regulations and policies, including those on trawling and gill netting in ocean and estuarine waters, activities in primary nursery areas (PNA's), and activities in outstanding resource waters (ORW's).

Policy 8.2.5 Off Road Vehicles
Off-road vehicles (with the exception of emergency vehicles) are not allowed outside public right of ways at Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.2.6 Development Impacts
New development and redevelopment activities shall not be permitted which would act to degrade the quality of natural and scenic resources at Wrightsville Beach.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy 8.3.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Economic & Community Growth & Development
Wrightsville Beach shall measure "progress" in terms of a continual refinement and enhancement of existing development forms and services. This shall be viewed in contrast with the undesirable wholesale displacement of existing development by larger, more intensive developments.

Policy 8.3.0 A Growth of Town's Jurisdiction
Expansion of the Town's ETJ and/or corporate limits on the mainland/Wrightsville Sound area shall not be supported.

Policy 8.3.0 B Population Increases
The Town shall discourage large incremental amounts of growth and development and large increases in population.

Policy 8.3.0 C Types of Development to be Encouraged
The Town will encourage single family and duplex residences, appropriate neighborhood-oriented and local businesses, and parks and natural areas.

Policy 8.3.0 D Density of Development
The Town will consider reducing the maximum density limits of its zoning ordinance for future development and redevelopment. The Town will also consider maximum size limitations for multifamily and commercial structures.

Policy 8.3.0 E Building Standards, Generally
The Town shall support refinements in building standards throughout the community to reflect the unique characteristics of different areas of Wrightsville Beach, including but not limited to: height, setbacks, lot coverage, and floor area ratios.

Policy 8.3.0 F Building Height
The Town will not increase the Town' s present building height limitation of, "not to exceed 40 feet" in all residential (and all but one commercial) district(s). This maximum height may be reduced in neighborhoods where the prevailing building height of existing structures is less than 40 feet. Maximum building height shall be measured from the average ground plane of the lot, rather than from the nearest fire hydrant.

Policy 8.3.1 Industries Desired and Local Assets Desirable to Such Industries
"Industry" in the traditional manufacturing/ processing/ production sense will not be allowed at Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.3.2 Provision of Services to Development, Generally
The Town will make all municipal facilities available to existing and future development/redevelopment, provided that such development is compatible with the growth and development objectives embodied in this land use plan. Connection to water and sewer lines will be at the expense of the developer. If water or sewer facility upgrades or expansions would be required for new development, the needed improvements would be at the expense of the developer.

Policy 8.3.2 A Potable Water Supply
The Town requires all new development to tie into its system for potable water supply and prohibits individual wells for potable use. The Town shall continue to take measures to ensure that the water supply system is adequate to meet the needs of Town residents and businesses.

Policy 8.3.2 B Wastewater Treatment and Disposal
All new developments are required to connect to the Town's central sewer system, which is connected, in turn, to the New Hanover County centralized sewer system. Package sewage treatment plants and septic systems are not allowed.

Policy 8.3.2 C Solid Waste Disposal
The Town supports measures to recycle and reduce the amount of solid waste generated by all permanent residents and businesses, as well as visitors to the Beach.

Policy 8.3.3 Urban Growth Pattern Desired
The Town shall support a small town growth pattern which reinforces the community's existing residential and commercial areas and protects the existing residential-commercial balance of the community.

Policy 8.3.4 Types of Residential Development Desired
The Town will not allow additional multi-family complexes and high-rise structures. Multi-unit complexes shall be limited to sites where they are presently located. New or expanded single family and duplex homes that are out of scale with other structures in their vicinity shall be discouraged.

Policy 8.3.5 Types of Commercial Development Desired
(1) The Town will encourage commercial establishments providing basic goods and services to year round residents and visitors. Examples include appropriately scaled and designed grocery stores, drug stores, sit down restaurants, etc.
(2) Architectural character and signage which is not in keeping with a small town atmosphere shall be strongly discouraged.
(3) To preserve the economic viability of the community's commercial/retail/service base, the Town shall consider mixed use ground floor commercial with upper floor residential on commercially zoned properties.
(4) It is the Town's policy to help preserve the basic service function provided by community businesses at Wrightsville Beach. The Town will carefully review proposals for the conversion of such existing commercial sites to any residential uses, including additional multi-family complexes, motels or high rise structures. Location of such multi-family complexes, motels, and high rise structures shall be encouraged on sites where they are presently located.

Policy 8.3.6 Redevelopment, Including Relocation of Threatened Structures
Relocation of structures endangered or damaged by wave action and/or shoreline erosion is encouraged. Redevelopment of damaged or destroyed structures will be permitted by the Town according to Town ordinances, provided all current building standards and CAMA requirements are met.

Policy 8.3.7 Commitment to State and Federal Programs
The Town supports the State Coastal Area Management Act, the State's beach access program, State and Federal channel maintenance and inlet projects, beach renourishment, and bridge and road improvement programs.

Policy 8.3.8 A Assistance to Channel Maintenance, Including Interstate Waterways
The Town supports State and Federal channel and inlet maintenance projects. All dredging and stabilization operations must be performed so as to minimize any damage to fish and wildlife habitat. When dredge material is suitable, the Town encourages such material to be used to nourish area beaches.

Policy 8.3.8 B Assistance to Beach Nourishment
The Town supports the application and designation of the local room tax in accordance with its original intent— a minimum of 80% to provide a trust fund for beach renourishment projects, and a maximum of 20% to support tourism promotion and marketing efforts.

Policy 8.3.8 C Beach Hardening
The Town adheres to current CAMA policies and regulations concerning beach erosion control. Structures, including but not limited to bulkheads, rip rap, groins, or other similar features which act to harden the shoreline along the beach, shall not be permitted. Beach renourishment, retreat, or other "non-hardening" measures shall be encouraged.

Policy 8.3.8.D Soundside Bulkheads
The Town will encourage the appropriate construction and maintenance of estuarine bulkheads as necessary within the context of the CAMA regulations.

Policy 8.3.9 Energy Facility Siting and Development
The Town is opposed to offshore continental shelf drilling for oil and gas. The location of shoreside OCS facilities at or adjacent to Wrightsville Beach would be inappropriate, is inconsistent with current zoning regulations, and would not be allowed within the Town's corporate limits.

Policy 8.3.10 Tourism
The Town of Wrightsville Beach shall welcome visitors to the area with a quality tourist experience within a year round beach community. Factors related to this policy include public safety, an atmosphere conducive to families, convenient services, a quality beach strand, and fishable, swimmable waters.

Policy 8.3.11 A Beach and Waterfront Access
(1) Public pedestrian access is limited to designated dune crossover access areas. The Town, through its CAMA minor permit program, may also allow the construction of individual over-the-dune structures for access to the beach at private access points. The intent of this policy is to encourage the construction and use of appropriately designed and located overdune structures to prevent destruction of the berm.
(2) The Town shall continue to maintain and improve its existing public beach access facilities.
(3) The Town will seek County and State funding assistance for waterfront and beach access projects and facilities.
(4) To relieve congestion at the Wrightsville Beach boat ramp, the Town shall encourage City and County efforts to provide for boat ramp facilities on the mainland side of the intracoastal waterway.
(5) The Town shall encourage the conversion of public street ends into pedestrian friendly access points.

Policy 8.3.11 B Soundside Waterfront Access
The Town shall seek to protect the remaining lineal shoreline of public and commercial properties providing for direct and indirect public access to the soundside and intracoastal waters of Wrightsville Beach. Further exclusive residential development, which would further wall off the balance of the Town's residents and visitors from the water, shall be discouraged.

Policy 8.3.12 Parks and Recreation
The Town supports the development, maintenance and enhancement of its parks and recreational facilities for the benefit of Town residents.

Policy 8.3.13 Downtown Area
The Town supports the continuation of a commercial downtown area, to encourage a "village type" atmosphere with appropriate local community businesses.

Policy 8.3.14 A Neighborhood Character and Preservation
The Town encourages the improvement, preservation and enhancement of the Town' s areas of unique character and neighborhoods.

Policy 8.3.14 B Scenic Vistas and Views
In recognition and appreciation of the scenic vistas and views of coastal waters, the Town shall discourage development forms (i.e. "wall to wall" or lengthy, continuous buildings and privacy walls) along estuarine and ocean shorelines which would block views to the water. The west side of Waynick Boulevard shall receive particular protection; i.e. the Town shall not permit structures in this area, other than customary docks, piers, and associated small, see through, "gazebos".

Policy 8.3.14 C Historic Preservation
The Town shall encourage the regular maintenance and preservation of older historic structures where desired.

Policy 8.3.14 D Undergrounding of Utilities
As opportunities and budgeting constraints allow, the Town will work with neighborhoods to put utilities underground.

Policy 8.3.15 A Transportation Planning, Generally
The Town shall undertake a traffic management program which seeks to achieve a balance between pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement and safety.

Policy 8.3.15 B Public Transportation
The Town will consider proposals from private entities for establishing public transportation from Wrightsville Beach to the adjacent mainland areas.

Policy 8.3.15 C High Rise Bridge
The Town does not support the construction of a high rise and/or second bridge to the island.

Policy 8.3.15 D Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic
The Town supports the use of bicycles as a functional means of reducing automobile traffic and parking demand at the beach.

Policy 8.3.15 E Keel Street Intersection
Ongoing efforts to correct operational deficiencies at the Keel Street intersection shall be supported.

Policy 8.3.15 F Parking
(1) The Town recognizes that on street parking is one of the most efficient forms of parking available at Wrightsville Beach. The Town shall avoid actions which would further eliminate on-street parking, unless necessary for public safety purposes.
(2) Large off street parking areas or structures are viewed as an exceptionally inefficient use of limited land resources. Where such uses are created, however, they shall be in keeping with the small town character, scale and design of Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.3.16 The Wrightsville Sound Area
The Town shall seek to establish and maintain an on-going joint planning effort with New Hanover County (or the City of Wilmington, upon annexation) for the Wrightsville Sound Area emphasizing input from the Town on issues of land use, community appearance, open space and traffic management for areas outside the Town's corporate limits.

CONTINUING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Policy 8.4.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Continuing Public Participation
Wrightsville Beach believes that on-going, effective public involvement, combined with factual analysis of any public issue, is the key to creating and maintaining a direction for the community upon which all may agree.

Policy 8.4.1 Land Use Plan Update Process
Public involvement will be encouraged among all permanent residents, business owners, and property owners during each Land Use Plan Update.

Policy 8.4.2 On-going Public Participation
Public involvement in planning matters will continue beyond the plan update process through providing public education and information, utilization of the news media and mailers, and public opportunities for discussion and comment on land use issues. The Planning Board will advertise the public meetings held to discuss land use and associated matters.

Policy 8.4.3 Neighborhood Planning
The Town shall encourage a high level of involvement by citizens and property owners in planning decisions through neighborhood planning. With neighborhood support, the Town shall institute an on-going neighborhood planning program, within which different parts of the Town will be addressed on a rotating basis.

STORM HAZARD MITIGATION/POST-DISASTER RECOVERY, AND EVACUATION POLICIES AND PLANS

Policy 8.5.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Storm Hazard Mitigation/Post-Disaster Recovery, and Evacuation Policies and Plans
The Town of Wrightsville Beach supports the establishment and implementation of policies, procedures, and actions which can reduce the potential for loss of life, minimize damage to property, and provide a framework for orderly reconstruction in the event of a damaging hurricane or other natural disaster.

Storm Hazard Mitigation Policies

Policy 8.5.1 A Storm Effect Mitigation
(1) The Town shall require all new and substantially improved structures to meet federal, state and local standards for construction in flood prone areas.
(2) The Town will only grant variances to the Flood Plain ordinance on a rare occasions to individual properties that meet the findings set forth under FEMA Guidelines.
(3) To help mitigate the effect of storm related hazards, the Town shall continue to work with the Federal, State and County governments on regular beach renourishment through a Shore and Hurricane Wave Protection Project.

Policy 8.5.1 B. Discouragement of Hazardous Development
The Town shall use a variety of methods, including particularly, CAMA setback requirements and zoning, to discourage the development of property that can reasonably be foreseen as potentially hazardous.

Policy 8.5.1 C. Public Land Acquisition
(1) The Town supports advanced planning for acquisition of properties that are not suitable for development, where such acquisition serves a useful public purpose. Such public purpose may include, for example, public access to the beach or sound, where such access is needed. The Town shall not make poor investments, however, in properties which are in danger of completely eroding, or where other liabilities could render them useless.
(2) The Town shall investigate outside funding sources for land acquisition and shall encourage gifts and donations for tax credits, as a mitigative measure for future storm events. To provide a proactive approach, priority areas for acquisition shall be identified in advance of storm events.
(3) Public acquisition of appropriate properties is also encouraged at the State and Federal level.

Policy 8.5.1 D. Evacuation
The Town's evacuation policies under a number of emergency situations shall be specified in the emergency operations plan of the Town. The plan shall be examined for possible revision or improvements on at least an annual basis.

Post Disaster Reconstruction Policies

Policy 8.5.2 A. Emergency Management Plan
The Town shall annually update its Emergency Management and Operations Plan, in concert with County and State emergency management officials, and with input from Town residents. The plan shall encompass pre-storm and immediate post storm activities and policies of the Town, including policies on evacuation and reentry, debris pick up, and public health and safety issues.

Policy 8.5.2 B. Local Reconstruction Policies
The Town shall issue building permits as expeditiously as possible to property owners whose structures have received minor damage by the event. If a structure has been damaged by more than 50%, the property owner will have to rebuild or modify the structure to meet current development ordinances.

Policy 8.5.2 C. Recovery Task Force
Depending upon the degree of damage following a major storm event, the Town shall have on call a variety of public officials to serve as a Recovery Task Force to orchestrate the Town's recovery activities . The potential membership and duties of the Task Force shall be specified in the Town's Emergency Management and Operations Plan.

Policy 8.5.2 D. Staging Schedule for Reconstruction and Repair
(1) To deal with the large number of requests for permits after a major storm, the Town shall employ a "building permit triage" for orderly issuance of building permits. Criteria for the order of issuance shall be developed in advance, with the need for modification acknowledged based upon the specific circumstances being faced.
(2) The Town shall also develop a planned sequence for the restoration of public utilities and services, with allowance for adjustment to deal with circumstances at hand.

Policy 8.5.2 E. Public Infrastructure Repairs and Replacement
The Town of Wrightsville Beach will assess any damage to public infrastructure at the earliest time after the event. Damage which may affect life and safety issues will be corrected to the extent that hazards have been minimized. Long term repair or replacement will be prioritized based on resources available, impact on the integrity of the infrastructure, mitigation of future hazardous situations, and on-going capital improvement needs.

1.3 The Land Classification System at Wrightsville Beach

1.3.1 Purpose of Land Classification and the Land Classification Map

(a) Purpose

The CAMA Land Use Planning Guidelines suggest that local governments classify various parts of their planning jurisdictions in accordance with the desired density and character of development for each area of their community. For example, the **Developed** class is intended for areas that are already urban in nature. The **Transition** class is intended for areas that are expected to become urban within the next decade. The **Rural** class is intended for areas that are not expected to become urban within the next decade—and so forth.

In the case of Wrightsville Beach, however, the entire incorporated area, (excluding marshes, the beach strand, and public trust waters) is essentially already urban in nature. In other words, the area is already fully developed and is currently receiving the full range of urban services, including particularly, centralized water and sewer. According to CAMA Guidelines, all of the developable area of Wrightsville Beach qualifies for inclusion in the **Developed** class, with the balance of the area—i.e. marshes, the beach strand and public trust waters—qualifying for the **Conservation** class.

Designating the entire land area of the Town into a single land class, however, defeats the purpose of providing policy guidance to the Town for different parts of the community. For this reason, the Town has elected to subdivide the **Developed** class into several sub-categories. These sub-categories

correspond to neighborhood planning areas within the Town with distinct development characteristics or common attributes. Policy positions are then provided for each of these neighborhood sub-classifications to help the Town maintain the distinguishable neighborhood qualities unique to each area.

(b) The Land Classification Map

Each of the neighborhood planning areas described below have been identified on a map of Wrightsville Beach. (Accompanying) Factors employed in determining the extent of each area varied from area to area, but generally related to one or more of the following: (1) The era or period in which the neighborhood was first developed. (2) The size of platted lots. (3) The height and character of buildings. (4) The nature of streets and parking. (5) The type(s) of land uses prevalent in the area. (6) The pedestrian or automobile oriented nature of the area.

1.3.2 Developed Areas (Neighborhood Planning Areas)

(a) Central Beach Area

The policy emphasis of this plan is on retaining the modest scale of most of the structures in the Central Beach Area, as well as its pedestrian-oriented nature. Additional large scale and/or intensive single family (mini-castles) shall be discouraged. Building heights of three stories or less (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate. Architectural designs shall be encouraged which continue to employ (1) functional porches facing at least the street and (2) wooden exterior siding. Additional multi-family residential or intensification of existing multi-family developments shall not be allowed. While new large scale or intensified commercial development shall not be permitted, existing commercial areas shall be protected for the useful services these businesses provide to the area.

(b) The North End

The policy emphasis of this plan is to allow for the continued use of each land parcel as currently built upon, with no further multi-family development, whether by new development or by increases in development intensity or scale. With the recent introduction of several four story single family residences into the area, public sentiment about additional four story structures has been negative. For this reason, this plan recommends that the Town seek to discourage or curtail the construction of single family residences of greater than two to three stories (total from ground level) in the North end area. This is consistent with building height policies for single family houses in all other areas of the community. The Town will also apply pier length controls to the North End by extending the Town's pier head line to this area.

(c) The Parmele Area

The policy emphasis of this plan is on maintaining the Parmele area for exclusive single family and duplex residential uses. (Town public works facility not affected) A maximum building height of three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate for this area.

(d) The Waynick Boulevard-South Lumina Area

The policy emphasis of this plan for the Waynick Boulevard-South Lumina Area is to encourage a continuation of the predominant single family and duplex residential development. Consistent with the modest size of most lots in this area, and with the objective of preserving views to both the ocean and sound, building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate. Existing commercial, multi-family and yacht club uses should continue to be allowed in their present form, but with no greater intensification of building mass or height. The Banks Channel side of Waynick Boulevard should continue to be used for docks and piers related to recreational boating in the soundside area. The Town shall not permit improvements along the sound side of the road which would block the open vista from Waynick Boulevard to Banks Channel.

(e) The South End

The policy emphasis of this plan is to allow the South End area to be used exclusively for the retention and development of traditional single family beach cottages (Coast Guard Station not affected), at a scale compatible with the original homes, modest lot sizes and street rights of way in the area. The avoidance of single family "mini-castles" packed on to small lots will also help avoid fire safety problems related to fire spreading quickly from one large structure to the next. Building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate in this area. Multi-family development shall not be permitted in this area.

(f) Old Harbor Island

The policy emphasis of this plan is to allow for the continued enhancement and "healthy" redevelopment of the area, while seeking to define reasonable limits for the height, size, mass and bulk of new replacement homes. Building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate for this area. If such height limits and other standards are not implemented in the near future, and current trends continue, redevelopment will eventually destroy the current attractive relationship of the scale the structures to the neighborhood's tree canopy and to other structures in the area.

(g) Pelican Drive, Lees Cut, Channel Walk & Lookout Harbor

The policy emphasis of this plan for this portion of Harbor Island is to allow for the continued use of each land parcel as currently built upon, with no increases in development intensity or scale. In keeping with the prevailing height and character of existing single family and duplex homes along Pelican Drive, building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate along this street. No further multi-family development, whether by new development or by increases in development intensity or scale at existing locations, shall be allowed. Any redevelopment of the existing commercial areas should be oriented toward community and neighborhood services.

(h) Causeway Drive/Marinas Area

The policy emphasis of this plan is to retain the existing land use mix for this part of Wrightsville Beach. Existing single family, duplex, and multi-family development should be allowed to continue as presently configured, with no significant intensification of development. Existing commercial land areas should be retained for the services they provide to area residents as well as for the provision of indirect access to Mott Channel and the intracoastal waterway. Future redevelopment proposals for the marina area, in particular, should include the following objectives: (1) retention of boating access to the public, whether by private or public means, (2) preservation of visual and physical access to the water's edge by the general public, and (3) preservation of community-serving commercial services. Residential uses in this area are not out of the question, provided that such uses shall not act to "wall off the water" in an exclusionary way. Given the size and configuration of the properties in this area, an overall plan for the future use of the entire commercial area south of the drawbridge would be in order. Such a plan could include, for example, ground floor retail, with a continuous public boardwalk along the water's edge, and, perhaps, residential units above. (This mixed use format with public access has worked successfully in other waterfront communities, and would be one way to satisfy the objectives outlined above.)

(i) Town Government and Parks Area

Policy emphasis for this portion of Wrightsville Beach should be on the retention of this area for the ongoing provision of local government services and parks and recreation. Recent initiatives to prepare a long-range master plan for the use of this important resource should continue to be supported.

(j) The Mainland/Wrightsville Sound Area

The policy emphasis of this plan will be on working proactively with the City of Wilmington (and/or New Hanover County) to address land development, traffic management and gateway appearance issues. The

Town will also maintain an ongoing interest in maintaining and protecting its groundwater supply facilities in the area.

1.3.3 Conservation Areas

(a) Purpose

The purpose of the Conservation class is to provide for the effective long-term management and protection of significant limited or irreplaceable areas. Management of these areas is needed due to the natural, cultural, recreational, scenic or natural productive values of both local and more than local concern.

(b) Location at Wrightsville Beach

Within the planning jurisdiction of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, the Conservation class includes all wetland, beach and sound areas associated with the Atlantic Ocean, the intracoastal waterway and the various channels and marshes surrounding Wrightsville Beach. Also included in this classification are interior marshlands adjacent to the government complex on Harbor Island.

(c) Policy Emphasis

The policy emphasis of this plan for Conservation areas shall be to protect the natural integrity and functioning of these areas, as well as in providing open space and visual relief. Approved uses shall be in accordance with CAMA General Use Standards, with priority given to direct and indirect public access having a minimal impact on the natural functioning of these systems. The Town shall also maintain an on-going concern for the preservation of views and vistas to these areas, by carefully controlling development along the water's edge which would serve to block or wall off the public from these valuable scenic and recreational resources.

2. Introduction

2.1 Why Prepare a CAMA Land Use Plan?

> "In many, many respects, the Town of Wrightsville Beach has done a commendable job over the years of managing it's growth and development. Despite significant growth pressures, the Town has generally responded well to maintain a community and quality of development which is the envy of many other coastal localities. The kind of community that has emerged at Wrightsville Beach does not happen by accident, but only through the deliberate, caring efforts of many individual citizens, Town officials and community leaders over a period of many decades. Clearly, the Town has a legacy of high standards and expectations to carry forward. . .
>
> . . .In the decade of the '90s, however, Wrightsville Beach is entering a significant new redevelopment phase which promises to be no less significant, in terms of its potential impact, than the initial development of the community. . . (These) emerging development trends at Wrightsville Beach are best dealt with now, rather than waiting until they take on a potentially irreversible momentum of their own." *(Study Model for Determining Consistency of Local Land Use Ordinances with CAMA Land Use Plans, Demonstration Project, Town of Wrightsville Beach, NC April, 1994)*

The above statement, taken from a special report to the Wrightsville Beach Board of Aldermen in 1994, provides a suitable introduction to this 1995 Update to the Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan. While the Town is indeed fully *developed*, it is not finished *developing* as a community. With the coming of Interstate 40 from the piedmont of North Carolina several years ago, the attractiveness of Wrightsville Beach as a weekend retreat and second home vacation resort has increased markedly. At the same time, the Town's convenient proximity to the Wilmington-New Hanover urban area has heightened interest in the community as a year round residential locale.

As pressures for redevelopment have heightened, new problems must be faced, including: an intensification of development on ever more expensive real estate, increased traffic congestion, increased parking demand for day visitors and residents alike, a need for much greater fire fighting capabilities, growing public expenditures for necessary services and facilities, and potential for degradation of the natural environment and quality of life that have been the trademarks of Wrightsville Beach for so long.

The intent of the Land Use Plan is to anticipate and deal with these development pressures in an organized fashion. Such planning should work to protect and enhance the quality of life of area residents and should also conserve and manage the natural resources with which the Town has been blessed. At the same time, advanced planning and foresight can help minimize increases in the local tax burden, through sound public and private investment decisions.

The North Carolina General Assembly recognized these issues when it passed the Coastal Area Management Act of 1974, which requires local governments in the coastal area to develop land use plans and update them regularly in accordance with the State Guidelines. The first Land Use Plan for Wrightsville Beach was adopted in 1976, with updates following in approximate five year increments through 1990. This plan updates the previous plan to address ever changing issues and development trends affecting the Town.

2.2 Functions of the Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan performs several important functions for local governing bodies and the general public; these functions are briefly described below:

• ***Source of Information*** - The plan's technical studies provide information on a number of topics, including the local economy, population, environmental features, land use trends and community facility needs.

• ***Guidance for Government Decisions*** - Once the governing body adopts the plan, it then has a foundation for guiding future decisions on budgets and ordinances, including zoning and other development regulations.

• ***Preview of Government Action*** - Decisions of the public in general, and developers in particular, are easier to make when the probable outcome of governmental decisions is understood; the adoption of a land use plan increases the predictability of government actions.

• ***Public Participation in Managing Development*** - Public meetings and hearings held during the plan's preparation help to insure that the plan reflects, to the extent possible, the specific nature of the current development issues facing the town.

The next section of the plan seeks to address several of the above functions by stating an overall community vision for Wrightsville Beach, and a series of objectives to be implemented through the land use plan.

3. Community Vision And Objectives

3.1 Community Vision

The CAMA Land Use Planning Guidelines state that "land use planning offers the best chance for developing a common vision and goals for the future that balance economic development and resource protection necessary for a healthy coast." (NCAC 15A Subchapter 7B Land Use Planning Guidelines, Section .0100 - Introduction to Land Use Planning, .0101 Purpose). For the Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan, the following overall vision for the community has been established:

General Vision Statement for Next Ten Years

We, the residents, business, and property owners of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, shall seek to maintain and enhance our community as one of the finest family oriented beach towns on the east coast of the United States. To do so will require diligence in working to retain the small town character and quality of the natural and man-made environment that has become the basis for our quality of life at Wrightsville Beach, and which makes our community such a desirable place for both visitors and residents alike.

3.2 Objectives

In addition, for the land use plan to be effective, it must be driven by a clear set of overall objectives. These objectives help bring form to a distinct growth strategy that is consistent with the desires of the community.

Land Use Planning Objectives

The Town's Land Use Plan and development regulations should:

- Allow for new development and redevelopment consistent with the Town's long range infrastructure and service capabilities—particularly traffic and parking, and required fire flows* (*sufficient water volumes and pressures to effectively fight fires).
- Allow for new development and redevelopment which recognizes legitimate development interests while conserving the long range environmental quality of surrounding waters and marshes.
- Allow for development types, uses, and services which conserve and foster a family beach atmosphere.
- Discourage development and redevelopment that would result in additional high density and "intense" development. Acknowledge that massive residential structures, whether owned by a single owner or partitioned into several owner units, can be equally "intense", in terms of the number of occupants, number of cars, water consumed, etc.

(continued)

- Pursue the most effective, financially feasible, equitable, and environmentally acceptable methods of beach and shoreline preservation.
- Establish a plan and system of ordinances that, following a natural disaster, provides the community with a rational method for reconstruction consistent with each of the above community growth objectives.
- Continue to accommodate day visitors and other visitors in a manner that is most compatible with the long range function and appearance of the Town.
- Encourage development types which pay for themselves over both the short and long term.
- Preserve the scale and ambiance of the Town's existing "downtown" business district, but do so in moderation*.
- Preserve the historic and architectural character of many of the remaining older residential structures on the beach, but do so in moderation*.

Note: The above objectives were first developed during the preparation of the 1994 "Study Model For Determining Consistency of Local Land Use Ordinances with CAMA land Use Plans, Demonstration Project, Town of Wrightsville Beach, NC. Based upon the input received from Town residents during the land use planning process, it is apparent that they are no less applicable in 1996 than they were in 1994.

**When used in this context, the term moderation is intended to convey the idea of encouragement and volunteer efforts in cooperation with business and property owners, as opposed to mandatory standards or legalistic requirements.*

The above objectives are intended to provide the foundation for the specific policies of the Town's Land Use Plan and ultimately, for changes in the Town's development regulations.

4. Summary of Data Collection and Analysis

4.1 Establishment of Information Base

4.1.1 Components of the Analysis

Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) guidelines for preparing land use plans in the coastal area of North Carolina require that an analysis of existing conditions and future trends be performed prior to policy development. The intent of this requirement is to ensure that the policies as developed respond as closely as possible to current problems and issues facing the community. Key components of the analysis may be described in four categories:

- **present conditions**—including population, economy, existing land use, and current plans and regulations;
- **land suitability constraints**—including physical limitations for development, fragile areas, and areas with resource potential;
- **community facility and service constraints**—including water, sewer, transportation, police, fire, schools, parks and recreation, and solid waste; and
- **estimated demand**—including population and economic projections, future land use needs, and community facility demands.

4.1.2 Subject Areas Examined

A number of basic studies are required so that a solid information base can be established for sound policy decisions. These basic studies include the following subjects:

- **Population and Economy**
- **Impact of Seasonal Population**
- **Existing Land Use Analysis**
- **Current Plans, Policies and Regulations**
- **Evaluation of Previous Land Use Plan Effectiveness**
- **Physical Limitations for Development**
- **Fragile Areas**
- **Areas with Resource Potential**
- **Water Supply**
- **Sewage Treatment and Storm Water Runoff**
- **Transportation Facilities**
- **Police**
- **Fire and Rescue**
- **Schools**
- **Parks and Recreation**
- **Solid Waste**
- **Population and Economic Projections**
- **Future Land Use Needs**
- **Community Facility Demands**

The technical reports listed above were geared to gathering and summarizing information related to the development of the Town. Collectively, these studies summarize past and present conditions, while providing the basis for estimating future conditions. Building upon this information, a number of policies were prepared by the Town Planning Board for consideration by the Board of Aldermen.

4.2 Some Findings from the Technical Studies

Population Growth Trends
After several decades of rapid population increases, population growth at Wrightsville Beach has slowed relative to the County. Two factors have come into play. First, New Hanover County in recent years has been witnessing a building and development boom of unprecedented proportions. Second, the Town has essentially reached a near "built-out stage" in terms of substantial land area available for new development. (Shell Island was the last remaining development parcel of any size.) Future population increases will be determined by (1) the few remaining buildable lots left in Town and (2) the nature of the redevelopment that is allowed.

Housing Types
About two thirds of all housing units at Wrightsville Beach are either a single family residence or a duplex. About 15% of all housing units are multi-family units in relatively small structures, while the remaining 15% are in structures with 10 or more units per building.

Economic Profile of Residents
An examination of employment patterns and occupations of residents at Wrightsville Beach reveals that there are no remarkable differences between Town residents and County residents. This lends support to the notion that Wrightsville Beach is, in some respects, a bedroom community for employers in New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. At the same time, household incomes of Town residents are substantially higher than residents of the County as a whole.

Estimate of Peak Day Population
In recent years, estimates of Peak Day Population have ranged from 35,000 to over 40,000 people. While there is no precise way to determine the actual number, methods employed have included aerial reconnaissance counts of persons on the beach, and extrapolations of population levels derived from drawbridge traffic counts and automobile parking levels throughout the Town on peak summer days. With the advent of Interstate-40 and the tremendous growth of the permanent population of New Hanover County since 1990, estimates of peak day population range as high as 50,000 by the year 2000. Because available parking space typically reaches the saturation level by mid-morning on a peak summer day, continued increases in peak day population will be dependent in the future upon higher vehicle occupancy levels, shuttle services, public transportation, and other methods.

Water Supply
From the flow data records for the past 10 years, water consumption has been increasing at an average rate of 3 percent per year. However, in the two most recent years for which average flows are available (1994 and 1995), the rate of increase has shown signs of slowing to about 1% per year. Based on all available trends and statistics, the average flow demands of the Town should be within the maximum capacity of the system through at least the year 2005.

Waste Water Disposal
The highest peak pump day in 1995 was 1,328,570 gallons. Public Works Department records for the past ten years indicate that the main pumping station pumped the highest peak flow of 1,987,000 gallons in September, 1988. This peak flow is above the average capacity of the station but well within its current peak pumping capability of 2.88 MGD. Thus, provided that New Hanover County continues to upgrade the capacity of its central sewage treatment plants, the sewer system capacity should handle the sewer service needs of the Town through at least the year 2006.

Transportation Facilities
The road system in Wrightsville Beach can easily handle the traffic on an average daily basis. However, during peak days, such as the Fourth of July, the existing facilities are strained. It is estimated, for example, that the peak traffic day in 1996 generated 52,000 vehicles at the drawbridge. The designed carrying capacity of the drawbridge is 50,000 vehicles per day.

4.3 For Further Information

The full studies from which the above findings were drawn are contained in Section 5, Present Conditions and Section 6, Constraints. To find out more about various aspects of land use and development trends at Wrightsville Beach, the interested citizen is also invited to visit the Town offices where a variety of studies, plans, maps, aerial photographs and booklets are maintained on file.

5. Present Conditions

This section presents a variety of information about current human, economic and physical conditions at Wrightsville Beach. Also included is a summary of local plans, policies, and regulations pertinent to the formulation of the land use plan.

5.1 Present Population and Economy

5.1.1 Population and Housing

(a) Population Growth, 1960 to 1994

Year	Wrightsville Beach	% of County Population	New Hanover County
1960	723	1.0	71,742
1970	1,701	2.1	82,996
1980	2,786	2.7	102,779
1990	2,937	2.4	120,284
1995 (Estimate)	3,114	2.2	139,577

Absolute Increase

Decade	Wrightsville Beach	% of County Growth	New Hanover County
1960-70	978	8.7	11,254
1970-80	1085	5.5	19,783
1980-90	151	.9	17,505
1990-95	177	.9	19,293

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1960 through 1990 and North Carolina Office of Budget and Management

The **Population Growth** table above shows that from 1960 to 1980, the Town grew faster than New Hanover County as a whole. Since 1980, however, two factors have come into play which have caused the community's rate of growth to slow relative to the County. First, New Hanover County in recent years has been witnessing a building and development boom of unprecedented proportions. Second, Wrightsville Beach has essentially reached a near "built out stage" in terms of substantial land area available for new development. (Shell Island was the last remaining development parcel of any size.) Future population increases will be determined by (1) the few remaining buildable lots left in Town and (2) the nature of redevelopment which is allowed. Certain forms of development, for example, such as multi-family development or single family replacement homes of greater size and scale, will act to intensify land use and population levels.

(b) Racial Composition, 1990

Race	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
Total	2,937	100%	120,284	100%
White	2,921	99%	94,895	79%
Black	5	<1%	24,097	20%
Other	11	<1%	1,323	1%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 1 Profile 1—Characteristics of the Population, P7. Race, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

The **Racial Composition, 1990** table shows that the Town is less than 1% Non-White compared to 21% for the County.

(c) Persons by Age, 1990

Age Group	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
0-4	59	2%	7,434	6%
5-17	257	9%	19,880	17%
18-24	551	19%	15,000	12%
25-44	1,107	38%	39,155	33%
45-64	621	21%	23,749	20%
65+	342	12%	15,066	13%
Total	2,937	100%	120,284	100%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 3 Page 2 of 29 Population: Age, Race and Sex (Part 1), P13/14/15. Race by Sex by Age, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

The **Persons By Age, 1990** table shows the relative distribution of age groups in the Town. In 1990, on a percentage basis, the Town had fewer pre-school and school age children compared to New Hanover County. This could be due, in part, to the high cost of housing at Wrightsville Beach and the economics of young families. At the same time, there were higher numbers of young adults aged 18 to 24. This may be due to the attractiveness of Wrightsville Beach to this age group, including particularly college students.

(d) Educational Attainment, Persons 25 and Over in 1990

Education Completed	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
<9th grade	23	1%	5,279	7%
9-12 No Diploma	68	3%	11,767	15%
H.S. Graduate	327	16%	22,578	29%
College, no degree	462	22%	15,760	20%
Associates Degree	174	8%	6,045	8%
Bachelors Degree	728	35%	11,935	15%
Graduate or Professional Degree	273	13%	4606	6%
Total	2055	100%	77,970	100%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 3 Page 10 of 29 Population: School Enrollment and Educational Attainment, P57/58/59/60. Educational Attainment by Race and Hispanic Origin, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

Residents of Wrightsville Beach generally have more education than County residents in general. About 95% of all adults are high school graduates compared to 78% in the County. Nearly half of all residents over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or additional advanced degrees. This compares with about 21% with college degrees in the County as a whole.

(e) Housing Types, 1990

	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
Total, All Housing Units	2,413	100%	57,076	100%
Total, All Single Family Units	1,110	46%	36,102	63%
Detached	826	34%	33,587	59%
Attached (Townhouse)	284	12%	2,515	4%
Multi-family	1,222	51%	15,683	28%
2 units per structure	504	21%	3,289	6%
3 to 9 units per structure	352	15%	6,957	12%
10 or more units per structure	366	15%	5,437	10%
Mobile Homes	57	2%	4831	9%
Other	24	1%	460	<1%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 1 Profile 8—Housing Unit Characteristics and Tenure, H41/H42/H43. Units in Structure, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County
Note: Due to the formatting of census geography, some small areas on the mainland of New Hanover County are included in the figures for Wrightsville Beach. This explains the presence of mobile homes in the statistics, despite the fact that there are no mobile homes within the corporate limits of the Town.

As shown in the **Housing Types, 1990** table, about two thirds of all housing units at Wrightsville Beach are either a single family residence or a duplex. About 15% of all housing units are multi-family units in relatively small structures, while the remaining 15% are in structures with 10 or more units per building.

(f) Owner vs. Renter Occupied Housing, 1990

	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
Total, All Housing Units	2,413	100%	57,076	100%
Occupied	1,401	58%	48,139	84%
Owner Occupied	715	30%	30,193	53%
Renter Occupied	686	28%	17,946	31%
Vacant	1,012	42%	8.937	16%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 1 Profile 5—Housing Unit Characteristics and Tenure, H1/H2/H3/H5. Housing Units, Tenure and Vacancy, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

The **Owner vs. Occupied Housing, 1990** table shows that in 1990, 58% of all housing units at Wrightsville Beach were occupied on a year round basis, compared with 84% in the County as a whole. Of the year round units in the Town, slightly more than 50% were inhabited by owner-occupants while slightly less than 50% were occupied by renters.

(g) Vacant and Seasonal Housing, 1990

	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
Total, All Housing Units	2,413	100%	57,076	100%
Vacant	1,012	42%	8,937	16%
For Seasonal, Recreational & Occasional Use	603	25%	3,345	6%
All other vacant	409	17%	5593	10%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 1 Profile 5—Housing Unit Characteristics and Tenure, H1/H2/H3/H5. Housing Units, Tenure and Vacancy, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

The **Vacant and Seasonal Housing, 1990** table shows that in 1990, 25% of all housing units at Wrightsville Beach were being held for seasonal, recreational, and occasional use, compared with just 6% in the County as a whole. (which includes the beach communities)

(h) Housing Value, Owner-Occupied Housing Units

Value	Wrightsville Beach	New Hanover County
Lower Quartile ($)	$133,400	$52,000
Median ($)	$192,700	$72,000
Upper Quartile ($)	$288,500	$103,700

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, North Carolina, Table 9, page 158 for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

In 1990, the value of **Owner Occupied Housing Units** at Wrightsville Beach was approaching three times the value of housing units in the County as a whole.

(i) Contract Rent, Renter-Occupied Housing Units, 1990

Contract Rent	Wrightsville Beach	New Hanover County
Lower Quartile ($)	$375	$241
Median ($)	$482	$324
Upper Quartile ($)	$621	$416

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, North Carolina, Table 11, page 189 for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

In 1990, the **contract rent of renter occupied housing units** at Wrightsville Beach was about one and one half times the contract rent of housing units in the County as a whole. Keep in mind that these contract rent figures apply only to rental units occupied on April 1 of 1990, the date of the official U.S. Census. Thus, most "high season" rental rates would not be reflected in these figures.

5.1.2 Local Economy

(a) Industry, Employed Persons 16 and Over in 1990

	Wrightsville Beach	% of Total	New Hanover County	% of Total
Agriculture, forestry, & fisheries	29	2%	931	2%
Mining	0	0%	53	<1%
Construction	171	10%	5,243	9%
Manufacturing				
Non durable goods	118	7%	5,396	9%
Durable Goods	79	4%	4,093	7%
Transportation	47	3%	2,325	4%
Communications & public utilities	92	5%	1,901	3%
Wholesale Trade	101	6%	2,567	4%
Retail Trade	439	25%	13,161	22%
Finance, insurance & real estate	119	7%	3,371	6%
Services				
Business and Repair	54	3%	2,636	4%
Personal Services	75	4%	2,228	4%
Entertainment and Recreation	49	3%	969	2%
Professional & related services				
Health Services	141	8%	5,091	8%
Educational Services	109	6%	4,718	8%
Other Professional and related services	130	7%	3,322	6%
Public Administration	11	1%	2,174	4%
Total, Employed Persons 16+	1764	100%	60,179	100%

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 3 Page 12 of 29 Population: Industry and Occupation, P77. Industry, Employed Persons 16 years and over, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

The table above is a summary of employment patterns and occupations of Wrightsville Beach permanent residents. There are no remarkable differences between permanent Town residents and County residents. This lends support to the notion that Wrightsville Beach is, in some respects, a bedroom community for employers in New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington.

(b) Household Income, 1989

	Wrightsville Beach	New Hanover County
Median Household Income	$35,455	$27,320
Mean Household Income	$46,789	$34,397

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 3 Page 16 of 29 Population: Population: Income, P80/81/107/108/110/111. Household, Family, and Non-Family Income in 1989, for Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County

Household incomes of Town residents in 1989 were substantially higher than residents of the County as a whole. Given the hefty increases in property values at the beach relative to the mainland, this gap would be expected to continue to widen over the coming years.

5.1.3 Impact of Seasonal Population

(a) Estimate of Peak Overnight Population, 1995

Household Type:	Number of Units/Parties	Household or Party Size	Total Peak Overnight Population
Year Round, Occupied Residential Units	1,490	2.09	3,114
Guests Staying in 1/2 of Year Round Residences	745	2.0	1,490
Vacant and Seasonal Residential Units	1,068	7.0	7,476
Hotel and Motel Rooms	660	2.0	1,320
Staying in Recreational Vehicles, Tents and Boats	100	2.5	250
Total	4,028	—	13,650

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, NC Office of State Budget and Management, Wrightsville Beach Chamber of Commerce, and Glenn Harbeck Associates for Wrightsville Beach. Basic methodology is from "A Methodology for Estimating Seasonal Population in Coastal North Carolina, 1996 DRAFT" available from the NC Division of Coastal Management, Raleigh, NC.

The table immediately above is a matrix for calculating the estimated **Peak Overnight Population** for Wrightsville Beach as it would likely have occurred over the July 4th holiday in 1995 (1995 is the most recent year for which permanent population estimates are available from the State). In choosing the July 4th holiday, it is important to note that the occupancy rates and party sizes are assumed to be at their *most extreme limits for the year.* This is consistent with the intent of the calculation: to determine the *peak* overnight population for the entire year. The estimate consists of five components, in order from top to bottom:

(1) Year round residents
(2) Visitors staying with year round residents
(3) Visitors and summer residents staying in vacation homes, second homes, or condominiums.
(4) Visitors staying in hotel and motel rooms
(5) Visitors staying in recreational vehicles, tents, boats and other similar portable or temporary housing.

Assumptions, based on discussions with the Wrightsville Beach Planning Board, are as follows:

- About one half of all year round homes at Wrightsville Beach would have an average of 2 overnight visitors over the peak day of the July 4th holiday.
- Vacation homes, second homes, and condos would house an average of 7 occupants—much higher than the average household size of year round residents.
- The figure for the total number of hotel and motel rooms at Wrightsville Beach was obtained from an itemized list provided by the Wrightsville Beach Chamber of Commerce.
- It is not unreasonable to expect that there would be a total of 100 temporary or mobile accommodations throughout the Town and its marinas on July 4th, with an average party size of 2.5 persons.

(b) Estimate of Peak Day Population (Including Day Visitors), 1994

In recent years, **Peak Day Population Estimates** have ranged from 35,000 to over 40,000 people. While there is no precise way to determine the actual number, methods employed have included aerial reconnaissance counts of persons on the beach, and extrapolations of population levels derived from drawbridge traffic counts and automobile parking levels throughout the Town on peak summer days. With the advent of Interstate-40 and the tremendous growth of the permanent population of New Hanover County since 1990, estimates of peak day population range as high as 50,000 by the year 2000. Because available parking space typically reaches the saturation level by mid-morning on a peak summer day, continued increases in peak day population will be dependent in the future upon higher vehicle occupancy levels, shuttle services, public transportation, and other methods.

5.2 Existing Land and Water Uses

5.2.1 Existing Land Uses Mapped

(a) Categories of Land Use

The Existing Land Use Map 1996 provides a detailed, lot by lot inventory of existing land uses throughout the Town of Wrightsville Beach. Categories of land use selected for the inventory, along with their working definitions are as follows:

Single family residential— a free standing, site built structure intended for occupancy by a single household unit.

Single Family, Manufactured Housing—a freestanding, factory built structure intended for occupancy by a single household unit. (While there are no such structures within the corporate limits of Wrightsville Beach, there are quite a number located in the Wrightsville Sound area of the unincorporated County.)

Single Family and Duplex Residential—Some sections of Wrightsville Beach are characterized by a mixture of single family and duplex (two separate living quarters in a single structure) structures.

Multi-family residential—any structure with three or more separate living quarters in the building. (Includes condominium buildings with multiple ownership but which may have a central management service.)

Office, Institutional and Municipal— includes offices, churches, schools, public buildings and lands, parks, utilities substations and similar use.

Private Clubs—includes yacht clubs, beach clubs and any other private club with buildings and/or property specifically dedicated to the club's use.

Commercial—any income producing enterprise which cannot be characterized as an office. (Includes, for example, retail establishments, commercial marinas, restaurants, and hotels with all rooms under one ownership

Vacant—developable land that is not occupied. (Does not include, for example, tidal marshes and other undevelopable "vacant" areas.)

(b) Existing Land Use Analysis

The distribution of existing land uses at Wrightsville Beach reflects a distinct pattern and predictable mixture of residential and commercial development, influenced strongly by several critical factors. Commercial uses, for example, are located at certain anchors or termination points in the community. These "anchors" include locations at various bridge ends, at fishing piers, and at the historic central business district or downtown area. Residential uses, on the other hand are influenced as much by the era in which they were developed as by their proximity to other land uses. In this regard, the existing land use map illustrates the telltale lot sizes and land development styles associated with the trolley era, the immediate post war era, and the 1960's, 70's, 80's, and 90's.

Land use conflicts at Wrightsville Beach have customarily not been associated with the mixture of uses in close proximity to each other. The fine-grained mixture of uses actually encourages a sense of community and pedestrian traffic and reduces demand for the automobile. Most conflicts, on the other hand, center on the scale and magnitude of uses, whether residential or commercial. Recent examples of such conflicts have included church expansions, large-scale restaurants, and large-scale residential development.

Note: While Hurricanes Bertha and Fran (both 1996) caused damage to many structures at Wrightsville Beach, such damage did not result in the total destruction of any buildings or lots within the Town.

For a more detailed analysis of land use and development patterns within various neighborhoods at Wrightsville Beach, the reader is directed to Section 9, Land Classification.

5.2.2 Existing Building Heights Mapped

The Existing Building Heights Map 1996 provides a detailed, lot by lot inventory of the height of existing buildings throughout the Town of Wrightsville Beach. Categories of building height selected for the inventory, along with their working definitions follow. Please note that all buildings were categorized according to the number of floors from the ground elevation to the peak of the roof, regardless of whether the first habitable floor was elevated or not. The intent is to describe the height of each structure relative to other structures, regardless of whether or not each "story" is inhabited.

(a) Building Height Categories

More than three stories— Structures over three stories in height, from ground plane to peak of roof.

Three Stories— Structures three stories in height from ground plane to peak of roof.

One or Two Stories or Vacant— Structures one to two stories in height from ground plane to peak of roof, or developable lots that are currently vacant.

(b) Existing Building Height Analysis

As noted previously in this document, most recently redeveloped properties at Wrightsville Beach have sought to "max out" their allowable building setbacks and heights. With this in mind, an examination of the Building Heights Map is a very good indicator of where either (1) recent new construction has occurred or (2) recent redevelopment activities are occurring. New construction is most evident at the north end of the outer island while redevelopment activity is observable at the south end of Wrightsville Beach and on waterfront lots on Harbor Island.

For a more detailed analysis of building heights within various neighborhoods at Wrightsville Beach, the reader is directed to Section 9, Land Classification.

5.2.3 Existing Water Conditions Mapped

CAMA land use planning guidelines call for the mapping and inventory of existing water conditions, including the identification of DEM (Department of Environmental Management) stream classifications, water quality use support (as identified by DEM), watershed boundaries, wetlands, primary and secondary nursery areas, Outstanding Resource Waters, and other features such as shellfish beds, beds of submerged aquatic vegetation. The intent is also to show these water quality conditions in relation to land side development.

(a) Water Quality Categories

At Wrightsville Beach, water quality conditions of relevance to this evaluation include DEM water quality use support classifications (SA, SB. etc.) and coastal estuarine wetlands. These categories of water quality condition may be further described as follows:

SA Waters—suitable for commercial shellfish harvesting and primary recreation involving swimming on a frequent or organized basis. (By inference, it may also be assumed that waters designated SA will yield at least some level of shellfish harvest.)

SB Waters—suitable for primary recreation involving swimming on a frequent or organized basis, but not for commercial shellfish harvesting.

Coastal Estuarine Wetlands—saltwater marshes, subject to regular or occasional flooding by tides, including normal wind tides. Marsh plants found here include saltwater Cordgrass (Spartina

alterniflora), Black Needlerush (Juncus roemerianus), Glasswort (Salicornia, spp.), Salt Grass (Distichlis spicata), Sea Lavender (Limonium, spp.), Salt Meadow Grass (Spartina patens), and Salt Reed Grass (Spartina cynosuroides).

(b) Existing Water Conditions Analysis

The **Fragile Areas, 1996** map shows the location of estuarine waters by their water quality classification. At the northern and southern limits of the Town's jurisdiction, for example, these waters are generally classified SA, suitable for shellfishing. Areas near Harbor Island, on the other hand, are generally classified SB, with the exception of the north shore, which is SA. Prospects for improving the water quality adjacent to the marina areas of Harbor Island are doubtful, given the pressures to intensify land and water uses in these areas, with associated increases in pollutants and stormwater runoff.

As an aside, it should also be noted that Masonboro Sound, while outside the Town's planning jurisdiction, was nominated and designated as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) by the state. The Town's efforts to reduce future increases in pollutants and runoff may result in long term benefits to the preservation of water quality in these Outstanding Waters.

Regarding coastal estuarine wetlands, most of the Town's salt water marshes are located between the islands of Wrightsville Beach and the mainland, as well as in the Bradley Creek area. These marshes also serve as primary and secondary nursery areas for many species of finfish, shellfish, and other wildlife.

For a more detailed analysis of water quality issues and the estuarine system of AEC's at Wrightsville Beach, the reader is directed to Section 8.1.2, Areas of Environmental Concern.

5.3 Current Plans, Policies, and Regulations

5.3.1 Plans and Policies

(a) 1990, 1985, 1980, and 1976 Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plans
The Wrightsville Beach CAMA Land Use Plan, first adopted in 1976, has been used as a guide to help future growth and development proceed at a rate and degree acceptable to the Town, while maintaining the quality of life and environmental integrity of the area. The Land Use Plan can be imagined as an umbrella which encompasses the Town's zoning ordinance and its other land use and regulatory mechanisms.

Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) regulations require updates to the Plan be made regularly, as specified in the State Guidelines. While previous versions of the Land Use Plan contained much valuable research and information concerning the growth and development of Wrightsville Beach, they were lacking in terms of specific, identifiable policy statements. The 1996 update to the land use plan seeks to remedy this shortcoming by including specific policy statements, which can be referenced by number.

(b)1988 Land Use Plan Addendum for Wrightsville Sound
The 1988 Land Use Plan Addendum addresses growth and development in the Wrightsville Sound area, the mainland adjacent to Wrightsville Beach. This plan was intended to encourage the application of good planning techniques to prevent and/or solve growth and development problems in the area. It encouraged a greater cooperative effort between the Town of Wrightsville Beach and New Hanover County in planning and zoning matters. Basic information and most policies developed for the Wrightsville Sound area were included in the 1990 Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan Update. For the 1996 Update to the Town's land use Plan, the Town continues to support cooperative planning with the County (or the City of Wilmington, as applicable).

(c) Annexation Feasibility Study, Wrightsville Sound Area, February, 1988.
This report explores the need for water, sewer and storm drainage improvements for a potential annexation area, Wrightsville Sound, on the mainland. It describes the authority which enables municipalities to undertake involuntary annexation and qualifies an area meeting statutory requirements. It describes the Town's major services and their associated expenditures, and projects revenues and Town

expenditures from service expansions under the annexation scenario. The study focuses on other facility needs including drawbridge operations, police and fire protection, street improvements, solid waste collection, building inspection services and recreation facilities improvements which would be required for annexation of the area. Subsequent to this study, interest in annexing this area has subsided and is reflected in the Town's land use planning policies

(d) Land Planning Study: Wrightsville Sound Area, December, 1986
This is an earlier study to investigate the feasibility of non voluntary annexation of portions of the Wrightsville Sound area including the cost effectiveness of extending municipal facilities and services. It was subsequently superseded by the 1988 study, above.

(e) The New Hanover County Land Use Plan (1986 and 1993 Updates)
These two updates to the County's land use plan articulate policies for growth and development in effect for the County, including the Wrightsville Sound area. In both updates, the County classified land in the Wrightsville Sound area as Resource Protection or Conservation, both of which limit residential density to a maximum of 2.5 units per acre. The County has a Conservation Overlay District (COD) for the waterfront area. The Special Highway Overlay District (SHOD) requires additional landscaping, setbacks, and signage controls along Eastwood Road. Its intent is to preserve the aesthetic appearance of this main traffic artery and gateway to Wrightsville Beach.

(f) Airlie Road Plan, May, 1983.
While this area is not within the planning jurisdiction of The Town of Wrightsville Beach, land use policies and actions in this area do influence the character of Wrightsville Beach and its immediate vicinity. This plan was prepared by the New Hanover County Planning Department as a neighborhood development plan for the area bounded by Airlie Road and Wrightsville Avenue. The plan seeks to guide future development while maintaining the desirable characteristics of the area. Neighborhood issues and goals are discussed, and policy actions and recommendations are given. The plan also includes alternative development and future land use alternatives for the Airlie Road neighborhood.

(g) Greater Wilmington Area Thoroughfare Plan
This plan includes Wrightsville Beach, contains a list of planned improvements to thoroughfares within the Wilmington area to the year 2005. The plan is prepared by NCDOT in cooperation with the City of Wilmington Transportation Planning Staff, and adopted by NCDOT and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is the area Transportation Advisory Committee.

(h) The Greater Wilmington 201 Facilities Planning Study Report, Part 1, Town of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, Final Revision, June, 1975
This plan was prepared to "develop a facilities plan for the construction of the most logical, economical, socially acceptable and environmentally sound wastewater treatment and disposal facilities for Wrightsville Beach".

(i) Dune Maintenance and Protection Plan.
This Plan established procedures and methods for protection of the dune and berm through vegetation maintenance and by the use of restrictive ordinances. This Plan has been implemented at Wrightsville Beach through US Army Corps of Engineers projects.

(j) Wrightsville Beach Access Plan.
This Plan sets out policies for development of public access points and to encourage beach visitors to use alternative modes of transportation, other than the automobile. With financial assistance from the Division of Coastal Management, the Town has established an organized system of public access points up and down the oceanfront. The implementation of this plan has provided visitors open accessibility to the oceanfront at 300 to 500 foot intervals along approximately 70% of the length of Wrightsville Beach's outer island.

(k) Capital Improvement Plan.
The Town of Wrightsville Beach has prepared capital improvement plans , in various formats, since the mid-1980's. The current format, which is updated annually, is based on a five year schedule. The purpose of this annual plan is to anticipate and budget ahead for major projects or needs of the Town where

substantial funding is necessary. A capital improvement project is customarily defined as a major, non recurring expenditure that may involve such things as construction, non-recurring rehabilitation, purchase of major equipment, or any planning, feasibility, engineering, or design study related to an individual capital improvement.

5.3.2 Current Land Use Regulations

(a) Town Regulations

The Town of Wrightsville Beach, like other municipalities in the State, has been granted general statutory authority by the North Carolina General Statutes to enact necessary ordinances designed to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. The local plans and policies of the Town of Wrightsville Beach are enforced through ordinances adopted by the Town Board of Aldermen, which is granted this power by the Charter ratified March 6, 1899 (now revised and consolidated, as adopted July 11, 1989). Below is a listing of Town ordinances and enforcement provisions related to land use and development which are also applicable to the satellite annexation areas in the Wrightsville Sound area. Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) major and minor permits must be acquired for development where necessary.

(1) Wrightsville Beach Zoning Ordinance
The zoning ordinance is the most prominent land development regulatory tool used by the Town of Wrightsville Beach. The ordinance was originally adopted in 1972. The ordinance attempts to carry out its functions by regulating the location and height of buildings, establishing minimum building lot sizes, and establishing certain districts in which particular uses relating to residential, commercial, or institutional uses are either allowed or prohibited.

Currently the Town has twelve zoning districts: three residential districts (R-1, R-1S and R-2); a Private Club District; five commercial districts (C-1 through C-5); a public and semi-public district for institutional uses; a shore district for the beachfront area; and a conservation district which restricts all uses except for piers and marinas. In addition to the uses allowed within each district, certain "conditional" uses are permitted on a case-by-case review basis. The zoning of Wrightsville Beach and the Wrightsville Sound area as of mid 1996 is shown on the Zoning Map accompanying this plan.

(2) Subdivision Regulations
The Wrightsville Beach subdivision regulations regulate the conversion of raw land into building sites. These regulations establish design standards for provision of certain facilities and infrastructure such as streets, water and sewer service, and drainage facilities. Given the limited supply of raw land remaining at Wrightsville Beach, subdivision regulations have limited application.

(3) Pierhead Line Ordinance
This set of regulations, enforced by the Town of Wrightsville Beach, concerns how far a pier can extend out into the water.

> Note: NCAC T15:7H.1205 (g) states: "The line of division of areas of riparian access shall be established by drawing a line along the channel or deep water in front of the property, then drawing a line perpendicular to the line of the channel so that it intersects with the shore at the point the upland property line meets the water's edge."

Discussion between the Town Planner and the CAMA enforcement officer for the Wilmington Regional Field Office of the Division of Coastal Management indicated that potential differences for interpretation regarding pier locations can be routinely handled and that if a conflict exists, the more restrictive regulation prevails.

(4) State Building Code
The Town of Wrightsville Beach has an active building inspections program and enforces the North Carolina State Building Code. Volume No. 5, the Fire Prevention Code, is of great importance and concern to the Town and its fire department.

(5) Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
This ordinance provides development and construction criteria designed to mitigate potential flood losses. Provisions of this ordinance meet and even exceed FEMA requirements.

(b) New Hanover County Regulations Affecting the Wrightsville Sound Area

(1) New Hanover County Zoning Ordinance
County zoning in the Wrightsville Sound area includes commercial (C), office/industrial (O&I) and low to medium density residential (R-15, R-20) uses. Additional provisions of the County Zoning Ordinance applicable in this area include a Conservation Overlay District, a Planned Development District, and a Special Highway Overlay District (SHOD).

(2) New Hanover County Subdivision Regulations
The Subdivision Regulations require individuals and developers who wish to subdivide property into new parcels or lots to go through a review and approval process with the County Planning Department and Planning Board. Plats of the subdivision must be submitted, found consistent, and approved before lots may be transferred to new ownership. These regulations also require certain improvements be performed before a subdivision can be approved. Roads and utilities must meet certain construction specifications and floodplains, existing facilities, and certain other items must be delineated.

(3) New Hanover County Sedimentation and Erosion Control Ordinance
The purpose of this ordinance is to reduce the potential for erosion and sedimentation associated with land disturbing activities. This ordinance requires developers to meet certain specifications in performing construction activities that disturb at least one acre of soil. The specifications include revegetation practices, use of silt fences and rip-rap, reduction of velocity of discharge of runoff water, and other soil conservation practices.

(c) Means of Enforcement (Staffing and Ordinance Adequacy)

The responsibility for enforcing local land use ordinances, including the State Building Code in Wrightsville Beach, is the responsibility of the Town's Public Works Department. This department is headed by a Director, with additional full-time personnel. The Town also has a staff planner/assistant to the town manager to coordinate planning and zoning matters. All planning and land development matters are brought before the Wrightsville Beach Planning Board, which meets monthly. The Planning Board conducts reviews and makes recommendations to the Town Board of Aldermen, which has final responsibility for making planning decisions. Ordinances having application in the Wrightsville Sound area are enforced by appropriate personnel of New Hanover County planning and inspections.

5.3.3 Relationship of Land Use Regulations to CAMA Land Use Plan

Planning doctrine states that land use regulations should be prepared "in accordance with a comprehensive plan". CAMA land use plans, if prepared properly, can serve the function of a comprehensive plan. Unfortunately, this has often not been the case. In many localities, these regulations were placed in force before the first land use plan was conceived. In other instances, the ordinances were created with little regard for the policies or the land classification system of the land use plan. In still others, there remains the viewpoint that the CAMA land use plan is simply a state mandated technical requirement with which the local government must comply every five years. In the case of Wrightsville Beach, however, the Town's development regulations were evaluated just two years ago in a systematic fashion. **(See Study Model For Determining Consistency of Local Land Use Ordinances with CAMA land Use Plans, Demonstration Project, Town of Wrightsville Beach, NC, 1994.)** A series of specific recommendations were provided regarding appropriate modifications to the Town's land use plan and development regulations . Excerpts and exhibits from other plans and ordinances were included in the appendices to the report, providing examples of how several of the report's recommendations might be carried out. The report concluded: *"...the measures necessary to address these development issues do not require Herculean changes in the Town's growth management system.... for the most part, the recommendations set forth in this evaluation involve limited, strategic refinements of the Town's land use plan and existing development regulations...*(Letter of transmittal to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, 4/21/94).

6. Constraints

6.1 Land Suitability

6.1.1 Physical Limitations for Development

(a) Hazard Areas

Hazardous areas at Wrightsville Beach may be described, for the most part, in one of three categories: (1) areas subject to washover and "static" flooding (2) areas subject to storm surge and "dynamic" flooding, and (3) areas subject to shoreline erosion and loss of property.

(1) Areas Subject To "Static" Flooding

The entirety of both Harbor Island and the Outer Island are subject to total inundation during the 100 year storm. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified these areas on the flood insurance rate maps (F.I.R.M.'s) as being in the A Zone, subject to washover and flooding. As older structures have been replaced over the years, however, the Town has been successful in implementing new construction standards that elevate most substantial improvements above the 100 year flood level.

(2) Areas Subject To Storm Surge And "Dynamic" Flooding

These are areas of the coast subject to high velocity wave action and storm surge during severe storms. These areas typically extend along the shoreline and to some distance landward of the frontal dune. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified these areas on the flood insurance rate maps (F.I.R.M.'s) as being located in the V zone.

(3) Areas Subject To Shoreline Erosion

These are typically areas along the ocean shoreline which are especially vulnerable to effects of sand, wind, water and erosion. Such hazardous areas may include beaches, frontal dunes, inlet lands, and other areas in which geologic, vegetative and soil conditions indicate a substantial possibility of excessive erosion or flood damage. Within CAMA such hazardous areas have been framed as the Ocean Hazard system of Areas of Environmental Concern (AEC's), and may be further identified according to four specific sub areas as follows: (1) The ocean erodible area (2) The high hazard flood area (3) The inlet hazard area and (4) The unvegetated beach area. Each of these areas is described in greater detail under Section 8.1.2E of this plan.

(b) Areas with Soil Limitations

Unlike many other localities, which may contain a large number of complex soil types and associations, there are only three soil types within Wrightsville Beach's jurisdiction. These three soil types are: Newhan fine sand, Tidal Marsh, and Urban Land. The three may be generally described as follows:

- **Newhan Fine Sand.** This soil type consists of gently sloping, excessively drained sands on dunes and along beaches and coastal waterways. Virtually all of the barrier island portion of Wrightsville Beach, including the beach area and all of the developed area backing up to Banks Channel, consists of Newhan fine sands.

- **Tidal Marsh.** These are the soils of the tidal flood plains between the coastal sand dunes on the ocean and the upland areas on the mainland. Most of these soils are covered by smooth cordgrass, but farther inland may be increasingly covered by black needlerush. These soils are very poorly drained, have slopes of zero to two percent, and are used mainly for natural habitat for shore and water birds. Most of the area within Wrightsville Beach's jurisdiction, including the area between Banks Channel and the Intracoastal Waterway (except for Harbor Island), is classified as Tidal Marsh. Generally, tidal marsh areas have no potential for conventional development.

- **Urban Land.** This soil type exists in areas where the original soil profiles have been cut, filled, graded, paved or otherwise changed so that the original soil types (mostly dry, poorly drained sands) have been substantially altered or destroyed. All of the developed portion of Harbor Island is classified as Urban Land.

Soils limitations for development at Wrightsville Beach are, for the most part, a non-issue. The Town has a central sewer collection system to remove wastewater from the island, and "development" is generally prohibited in marsh areas. However, there is still the need for on-site sampling, testing, and study of specific sites before design and construction of projects.

Regarding the Wrightsville Sound area, most soils there belong to the Murville-Seagate-Leon association. These soils may be described as "very poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained", and having a "fine sand to sand surface layer and a fine sand, sand, sandy loam, and clay loam subsoil." Some of the soils in the area (Johnston, Lynnwood and Murville) are subject to frequent flooding and wetness. This places some constraints on building site development, particularly in terms of subsurface and surface features.

A more detailed explanation of the capabilities and characteristics of soil types found at Wrightsville is contained in the **Soil Survey of New Hanover County** published by the US Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, 1977. The report also shows the general location and extent of these soils on maps.

(c) Water Supply Areas

Well water in the region is drawn from the Cretaceous Aquifer, which lies 190 to 1,100 feet below the land surface. This water supply is considered sizable, and the Town wells draw primarily from the Pee Dee Formation. Overall mineral content is low but iron levels are often high. Water is brackish at this depth. The aquifer receives recharge from infiltration through the overlying sediments and from upland recharge areas to the west. Overlying this aquifer is a limestone-sand unconsolidated sandy layer some 130 feet thick, the Castle Hayne aquifer. Here water is abundant and often rich in iron and hydrogen sulfide. Water is salty at depth near the coast. Above the Tertiary system aquifer (0 to 60 feet) lie the Post Miocene, Yorktown and surficial aquifers of predominantly sands and clay. Water in these aquifers is low in mineral content, rich in iron, and often salty near the coast. Care and consideration must be taken not to overtax the water supply; excessive pumping and depletion of the fresh water will likely result in salt water intrusion into the aquifer on the island and even the mainland.

Presently, there are four providers of water to businesses and residents of the Wrightsville Sound area: Cape Fear Utilities Company, private individual wells, the Town of Wrightsville Beach and the City of Wilmington.

(d) Areas With Slopes Exceeding 12%

There are no known areas in the Town of Wrightsville Beach with slopes exceeding 12%, except perhaps, very small isolated pockets of grade changes and the slopes of remaining natural and man-made berms and sand dunes.

(e) Shoreline Areas With High Erosion Potential

Much of the north end of the outer island of Wrightsville Beach has the potential for high erosion rates. This has become particularly evident in recent years, with the southward movement of Masons Inlet. Virtually any portion of the oceanfront, however, may be subject to significant changes in erosion/accretion rates.

(f) Small Watersheds Draining Into Special Waters

All of the planning jurisdiction of Wrightsville Beach drains into the sound waters east of the mainland of New Hanover County. Waters immediately adjacent to and surrounding Harbor Island are generally classified as SB (not suitable for shellfishing) while waters west of the northern and southern ends of the

outer island are classified as SA (suitable for shellfishing). There are no particular small watersheds at Wrightsville Beach draining into special waters.

6.1.2 Fragile Areas

"Fragile areas" are those areas which could easily be damaged or destroyed by inappropriate or poorly planned development. Included are coastal wetlands, sand dunes, ocean beaches and shorelines, estuarine waters and shorelines, outstanding resource waters, public trust waters, complex natural areas, areas sustaining remnant species, unique geologic formations, national landmarks, wooded swamps, prime wildlife habitats, scenic points, archaeological and historical sites, maritime forests, and "404" wetlands.

As a coastal estuarine island, virtually all of Wrightsville Beach consists of or is adjacent to fragile areas associated with the coastal environment: the tidal and nontidal wetlands, the ocean and estuarine areas, dunes, scenic points, natural areas, and public trust waters. The general location and extent of important fragile area resources at Wrightsville Beach, including tidal wetlands, historic structures, areas of high probability for archaeological sites, and inlet hazard areas at Wrightsville Beach are identified on the Fragile Areas Map, 1996.

Some of these fragile areas have been specifically designated by the State of North Carolina as being critical resource areas; environmentally significant and vulnerable to damage and destruction by development. These "Areas of Environmental Concern" or "AEC's" are described in detail, along with applicable policies, under Section 8.1.2 of the Resource Protection Policies Section of this plan.

6.1.3 Areas with Resource Potential

As defined by CAMA, Areas with Resource Potential include productive and unique agricultural lands: potentially valuable mineral sites; publicly owned forests, parks, fish and game lands, and other non-intensive outdoor recreation lands; and privately owned wildlife sanctuaries. These areas may be nominated for approval and designation as AEC's by the Coastal Resources Commission. Some may also be a part of other AEC's.

Within the jurisdiction of the Town of Wrightsville Beach there are no traditionally accepted areas with resource potential. However, the Town does maintain significant park acreage. Also, it could be said that the extensive marsh and estuarine waters surrounding the Town of Wrightsville Beach are indeed productive fish and game lands. Residents of the Town expressed strong interest in preserving the environmental quality and productivity of these critically important natural areas.

6.2 Community Facilities and Services Capacity

In this section, the design capacity and level of utilization of the existing community facilities and services within the Town are examined and analyzed to determine if future demands can be met. Future demands are projected ahead 10 years to the planning horizon of the year 2006.

6.2.1 Wastewater Management

(a) Background

The Town of Wrightsville Beach operates and maintains a central sewer collection system. The system extends throughout the present corporate limits that encompass the Outer Island and Harbor Island. It includes four (4) small lift stations, and one (1) main lift station which is located at Parmele Boulevard and North Lumina Avenue. The main lift station is connected to the County's Northeast Interceptor System and ultimately to the City of Wilmington's Southside Wastewater Treatment Facility located on River Road next to the Cape Fear River. The system is operated under an interlocal contract agreement between the Town, New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. This agreement was an outgrowth of Greater Wilmington Area 201 Facility Planning Project of the 1970's. Construction of the Northeast Interceptor and the Wrightsville Beach Connector and Pumping Station was funded in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Construction Grants Program of the Clean Water Act.

(b) Capacity

The capacity (average daily flow) of the existing main pumping station at Wrightsville Beach is 1.44 MGD (million gallons per day). However, the station has the capability to pump short duration peak flows of 2.88 MGD. The interlocal agreement between the City and Town of Wrightsville Beach is for a 60-day average of 1.5 MGD. Average daily sewer flows for the past ten years at Wrightsville Beach are shown below.

DAILY SEWER FLOW (AVERAGE) - 10 YEARS

Year	total flow (gals)	average daily flow (gals)
01/01/86-12/31/86	256,855,000	703,712
01/01/87-12/31/87	250,925,800	687,466
01/01/88-12/31/88	233,950,000	639,208
01/01/89-12/31/89	236,214,000	647,162
01/01/90-12/31/90	291,136,000	797,633
01/01/91-12/31/91	294,055,630	805,632
01/01/92-12/31/92	276,110,840	754,401
01/01/93-12/31/93	274,455,020	751,932
01/01/94-12/31/94	248,472,860	680,748
01/01/95-12/31/95	256,187,040	701,882

(c) Projected Flows

From these figures, a general projection of approximately 850,000 gallons per day can be determined for the year 2000 and 925,000 gallons per day for the year 2006. These numbers should be considered conservative (meaning on the high side) since the overall trend for the past five years has been one of declining flows. (Declining flows are due to the Town's concerted effort over the past several years to reduce groundwater infiltration and inflow into the collection system of underground pipes. Specific projects have included slip lining of existing sewer lines and rehabilitation of existing manholes.) Thus, the average daily volume projected for ten years from now is still well below the 1.44 million gallon per day rated capacity of the Town's main pump station.

Beyond these annual average flows, the highest peak pump day in 1995 was 1,328,570 gallons. Public Works Department records for the past ten years indicate that the main pumping station pumped the highest peak flow of 1,987,000 gallons in September, 1988. This peak flow is above the average capacity of the station but well within its current peak pumping capability of 2.88 MGD. Thus, provided that New Hanover County continues to upgrade the capacity of its central sewage treatment plants, the sewer system capacity should handle the sewer service needs of the Town area east of the waterway through at least the year 2006.

(d) Wrightsville Sound

The Wrightsville Sound area has historically used septic tanks as its primary means of wastewater treatment and disposal. In the time since the last update to the Land Use Plan, New Hanover County has installed a county sewer system serving this area. This system is also connected to the Northeast Interceptor and wastewater is treated at the City's Southside Wastewater Treatment Works. The collection system in the Wrightsville Sound area should also have sufficient reserve capacity to serve anticipated growth in this segment of the planning area through the year 2006.

6.2.2 Drinking Water Supply System

(a) System Overview

At present, the Town of Wrightsville Beach's municipal water system provides service to all areas of the town east of the intracoastal waterway and to the satellite annexation areas at Wrightsville Sound west of the waterway. Facilities located east of the waterway include two elevated storage tanks: one near the north end and one near the south end of the barrier island. These elevated tanks have capacities of 300,000 and 200,000 gallons, respectively. The Town also has two water treatment centers (No. 1 on

Harbor Island near Town Hall and No. 2 at Allens Lane on the mainland at Wrightsville Sound) which have associated ground storage reservoirs with a total capacity of 1.5 million gallons. The storage capacity of reservoir No. 1 is one million gallons and that of No. 2 is 0.5 million gallons. The Town has a total of ten (10) active water supply wells. One is inactive at this time.

(b) Wrightsville Sound Area

In the Wrightsville Sound segment of the planning area, service is provided by the Town, Cape Fear Utilities Company, and private individual wells. The City of Wilmington has a 24-inch finished water trunk main running along Eastwood Road (US Highway 74) but its service at this time is limited to Landfall (a Planned Unit Development) and its associated commercial development at the intersection of US 74 and Military Cutoff (US Highway 17 Truck Route). Cape Fear Utilities Company's water supply wells are located to the west of Wrightsville Sound. An 8-inch trunk main serves the central portion of the mainland segment of the planning area. The Town has two water supply wells in service in the Wrightsville Sound area which are connected to the Water Treatment Center No. 2 at Allen's Lane and to the water mains which serve the satellite annexation properties.

The Town's distribution system in the Wrightsville Sound area connects the Town's mainland water treatment facility and supply wells with the satellite annexation properties. The municipal distribution system consists of 12-inch, 10-inch and 8-inch mains with fire hydrants and valving required to serve all areas of the Town including the existing annexed tracts.

A 14-inch subaqueous waterline connection beneath the Intracoastal Waterway gives the Town considerable flexibility of utilizing all ten (10) of its water supply wells and combined elevated and ground storage of 2 million gallons both east and west of the Waterway to meet its water supply needs within its total jurisdiction.

(c) Capacity

The rated capacity of a water system is based on a number of criteria, some established by State regulations, and others by engineering considerations and practice. The State regulations pertinent to rating the system are: (1) the well field should be able to produce the system design daily average flow in a 12-hour pumping period; (2) the total storage available should be at least one average day's flow. The design daily flow applicable to these criteria are the average flows which occur in the system.

In a resort community such as Wrightsville Beach, the system flows are subject to unusual peaks which occur seasonally. Therefore, while it is not necessary or practical to meet the above State criteria on those peak days, the system must be able to handle those flows for short periods without running out of water. To accommodate these periods, good engineering practice dictates that the well field should be able to meet the peak daily flows in 24 hours pumping time with the largest well out of service. The capacities listed below are based on the above criteria.

EXISTING WELL DATA

Well	Well Field Location	Set Production Capacity	Capacity
#1	1601 N. Lumina	350 GPM	228 GPM
#2	2399 N. Lumina	400 GPM	200 GPM
#3	1 West Raleigh	Rehabilitation In Progress	
#4	225 Waynick	350 GPM	208 GPM
#5	435 Causeway	318 GPM	190 GPM
#6	7 Marina	300 GPM	200 GPM
#7	302 Pelican	200 GPM	100 GPM
#8	201 W. Salisbury	520 GPM	330 GPM
#11	2009 Allens Lane	325 GPM	215 GPM
#12	1729 Allens Lane	220 GPM	100 GPM
	Totals:	**2,975 GPM**	**1,755 GPM**

Well Field Capacity	2,975 GPM x 12 HOURS =	2,142,000 GPD
Established Pumping Rate	1,755 GPM x 24 HOURS =	2,527,000 GPD
Established Pumping Rate (Well # 8 out of Service)	1,425 GPM x 24 HOURS =	2,052,000 GPD

****Well #3** is in the process of being rehabilitated and returned to active service. Expected production is 150 GPM or 108,000 GPD. Rated capacity maximum production is 216,000 GPD.
****Well #9,** located at 308 Corbett Street, will likely be reactivated within the next 3 years. Expected rated production is 100 GPM or 72,000 GPD. Maximum production is 144,000 GPO.

(d) Average Daily Flows (Demand)

Average daily water flows for the past ten years are as follows:

AVERAGE DAILY WATER FLOW, 1986 TO 1995

YEAR	TOTAL FLOW (GALLONS)	AVERAGE DAILY FLOW (GALLONS)
01/01/86-12/31/86	291,493,900	798,613
01/01/87-12/31/87	381,007,546	824,678
01/01/88-12/31/88	301,435,500	823,594
01/01/89-12/31/89	319,026,618	874,046
01/01/90-12/31/90	361,557,568	990,569
01/01/91-12/31/91	357,367,672	979,090
01/01/92-12/31/92	347,947,000	950,675
01/01/93-12/31/93	373,072,000	1,022,115
01/01/94-12/31/94	353,586,000	968,729
01/01/95-12/31/95	358,269,000	981,559

From the flow data records for the past 10 years, flow has been increasing at an average rate of 3 percent per year. However, in the two most recent years for which average flows are available (1994 and 1995), the rate of increase has shown signs of slowing to about 1% per year. The following table presents projected average flow rates according to a high (2-3%), medium (1-2%) and low (.5-1%) growth trend. All numbers have been rounded for simplicity.

PROJECTED GROWTH IN WATER USE, AVERAGE DAILY FLOWS
High, Medium, and Low Growth Scenarios
1996-2005

Year	High	Medium	Low
1996	1,065,000	1,020,000	995,000
1997	1,085,000	1,030,000	1,005,000
1998	1,115,000	1,055,000	1,015,000
1999	1,145,000	1,065,000	1,025,000
2000	1,170,000	1,085,000	1,035,000
2001	1,200,000	1,105,000	1,045,000
2002	1,225,000	1,125,000	1,055,000
2003	1,255,000	1,140,000	1,065,000
2004	1,305,000	1,160,000	1,075,000
2005	1,330,000	1,180,000	1,085,000

From this projection, the average flow demands should be within the maximum capacity of the system through at least the year 2005.

6.2.3 Transportation Facilities Update

(a) General

The US 74-76 bridge across the Atlantic intracoastal waterway is the only means of ingress and egress to the town from the mainland. Crossing the bridge onto Harbor Island, the four-lane drawbridge connects into a five-lane road (US 76), which has a two-lane fork heading to the north end of the beach (US 74-W.Salisbury Street), intersecting with North Lumina. On the other hand, the five-laned US 76 (Causeway Drive) runs into Waynick Boulevard and Lumina across the Banks Channel Bridge at the center of the town. Waynick Boulevard, which is four-laned, is the major thoroughfare to the southern end of the beach.

(b) Traffic Volumes and Roadway Design Capacity

Utilization of the main roads on Wrightsville Beach, like all other facilities, is subject to summertime seasonal peaks. The **Traffic Volumes** table below shows the estimated peak traffic volumes for 1990 and 1996, along with the estimated design capacities of each of the major thoroughfares.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND ROADWAY DESIGN CAPACITY
Town of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Thoroughfare	Est. Peak Day Volume (VPD) 1990+	Est. Peak Day Volume (VPD) 1996+	Est. Design Capacity (VPD)++	Peak Percent Use 1990	Peak Percent Use 1996	% Increase
AIWW Bridge	45,030	52,000	50,000	90.1	104.0	15.4
US 74	14,315	20,800	35,000	40.9	59.4	31.1
US 76	24,462	31,200	20,000	122.3	156.0	27.5
Waynick Blvd.	12,684	19,600	28,000	45.3	70.0	54.5

Sources of Data: NC Department of Transportation, Division 3, Wilmington, NC and Town of Wrightsville Beach, NC.

* *VPD = Vehicles Per Day.
+Peak usage is based on NCDOT count of vehicles using AIWW bridge on July 4th Weekend. Peaks for other thoroughfares are derived by increasing AADT by factor of 1.812 which represents the ratio of peak to AADT .
++Provided by NCDOT, based on maximum "free flow" capacity, (i. e., no traffic lights, roadside parking or other obstructions) .

Compared to the maximum design capacities, U.S. 74 and Waynick Boulevard appear to have current excess capacities, while the drawbridge at the intracoastal waterway and U.S. 76 are over capacity at peak times. However, capacity estimates assume free and open flow on all thoroughfares, without obstructions and limited roadside parking. Any significant variations from these assumed conditions renders design capacities less the optimum shown.

In keeping with the dramatic increases in the population of New Hanover County since 1990 (See **Population Growth** table at Section 5.1.1), percentage increases in peak percent use have also increased dramatically over the same period.

(c) Wrightsville Beach (Heide-Trask) Drawbridge

The only roadway access connecting segments of the Town east and west of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway is by the Heide-Trask Drawbridge on US Highways 74-76. The drawbridge is operated and maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Since the summer of 1985, the Town has maintained radio communications with the drawbridge operator by placing a Town radio in the operator's control booth. The bridge operator also has radio contact with vessels using the Waterway. In November, 1987, the Town was successful in having the US Coast Guard place the drawbridge on a schedule of opening every hour on the hour, year-round for pleasure craft, between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 PM. Commercial craft and vessels operated by governmental agencies can still pass through the drawbridge on demand as necessary.

The average opening of the drawbridge lasts about four minutes per vessel passing through, but could be longer. The bridge operator notifies the Town's police dispatcher in advance of any time the bridge will be open longer than usual to accommodate the passage of a dredge or barge tow. The County's 911 emergency communication center also has radio communications with the bridge operator and notifies the operator when an ambulance is approaching the bridge. In the same way, the Town's police dispatcher notifies the bridge operator when there is a fire, police or medical emergency within the Town that requires highway access across the bridge. Under these emergency circumstances, the bridge operator will not open the bridge until the emergency has been cleared.

Should the bridge become inoperable because of mechanical problems or for other reasons, many beachgoers or resident travelers could find themselves stranded on the beach. Both the Police and Fire Departments maintain radio contact with the bridge and can assist with minor repairs. The Fire Department maintains an initial response plan and plans for long term breakdown and ferry service in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Transportation. If the bridge were ever disabled during a storm or during dangerous or threatening weather, a temporary ferry shuttle system would also be established, using DOT supplied ferry boats. These ferries would be used to transfer cars and people across the AIWW to the mainland. The boats would also be used to ferry emergency vehicles, school buses, commercial traffic (food delivery trucks, for example). To supplement the ferries, smaller State-owned boats would also be mobilized in order to move people without vehicles.

(d) Parking

Another problem related to traffic is the demand for public parking spaces. With ever-increasing numbers of day visitors to the beach during the summer season, traffic congestion is compounded and the number of parking space available is limited. Recent figures show that there are 1,899 public parking spaces in Wrightsville Beach, down from 2,137 in 1990 (see Table below). This apparent decrease in parking spaces may be attributed in some measure, however, to a change in the 1990 and 1995 methodologies for counting spaces. In 1995, the Town did not count non-striped parking spaces on South Harbor Island. At the same time, some actual reductions in parking spaces were realized by the loss of about ten on-street spaces along North Lumina Avenue for the creation of a fire lane. Virtually any loss of public parking at Wrightsville Beach must be treated with significance, as an estimated 5,000 cars could be seeking parking at any time on peak days.

PARKING FACILITIES
TOWN OF WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

	1990	1995
Parking Spaces in Lots	337	350
Total On-Street Parking - Wrightsville Island	1,373	1306
Town Park - Bob Sawyer Drive	104	104
Total On-Street Parking - Harbor Island	323	139
Total Public Parking Within Town	2,137	1,899

Source: Town of Wrightsville Beach Public Works Department and Town Planning Department.

(e) Wrightsville Sound

Three (3) major thoroughfares pass through the Wrightsville Sound area (US 74, US 76 and Military Cutoff Road) and several "side streets" cross through the central portions of the area (Stokley Road and Allens Lane). Traffic routing can seem somewhat confusing at intersections, especially where the major thoroughfares converge and diverge.

The vehicular use of these mainland roadways sometimes exceeds their capacity. Traffic congestion is often a problem in the Wrightsville Sound area, particularly during the summer months. During summer peak days, such as Saturdays in July, a peak of more than 52,000 vehicles can cross the AIWW bridge. Traffic can back up Eastwood Road more than half way to Military Cutoff Road, especially when the draw bridge goes up to allow multiple vessel passage. The increasing volume of traffic along Airlie Road is frequently slowed by the growing number of bicyclists riding in the road and/or along its shoulder, presenting a serious safety concern. However, the possibility of a bike path would alleviate much of this problem. The narrow width of Airlie Road and lack of space for parking places a limit on the extent of development which can occur along the northern portion of the road adjacent to the AIWW. Limited land area, wetlands, trees, and residential homes prevent the widening of this part of Airlie Road. Not all portions of the study area, particularly the interior of Airlie Road neighborhood, are accessible by roadways, be they paved or unpaved. This may deter development of vacant undeveloped residential areas.

(f) Transportation Summary

Based on the above information, it appears that the main thoroughfares serving the planning area have sufficient capacity to handle traffic during most periods through the year 2000. However, traffic congestion during certain peak periods will continue to occur. This periodic congestion will have to be tolerated as a fact of life for area residents and visitors as there is no easy solution to the problem, given the inherent limitations of the drawbridge over the AIWW. Nevertheless, further study of roadway, traffic and parking issues is warranted.

6.2.4 Schools

The capacities and enrollments of New Hanover County public schools serving the Town of Wrightsville Beach are as shown below.

School Capacities and Enrollments
of Schools Serving Wrightsville Beach, 1996

Name of School	Fall 1996 Enrollment	Capacity w/o mobile units	Capacity w mobile units
Wrightsville Beach Elem (K-5)	218	154	203
M.C.S. Noble Jr. High School (6-8)	959	654	692
EA Laney High School (9-12)	1858	1540	1782

Source: Mark Strickland, New Hanover County Schools Central Office, 8/29/96

While increases in the number of school aged children at Wrightsville Beach have been small at best, the New Hanover County School System has experienced an explosion in the student population. As a result, nearly all schools in the system are at or over capacity. Schools serving the Town of Wrightsville Beach are no exception. Wrightsville Beach Elementary School, serving grades K through 5, is the only school in the Town, and is currently over capacity, even with the addition of mobile classroom units.

New Hanover County school officials do not anticipate much growth in the number of elementary school age children within Wrightsville Beach proper over the next few years. However, growth in the elementary school age population in the County is expected to continue to mushroom. Despite the approval of a school bond referendum two years ago, County officials continue to struggle with the need for additional classroom space.

Other educational services in New Hanover County, in addition to the public school system, include several private schools (primary, secondary, and special education), the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and Cape Fear Community College.

6.2.5 Solid Waste Disposal

The Town of Wrightsville Beach collects solid waste from all properties under its jurisdiction. Solid waste is disposed of in the County incinerator facility, located on US Highway 421 North. Alternately, should the incinerator be shut down for repairs or maintenance, solid waste is taken to the County Landfill which is also located on US Highway 421 North.

There is no County trash collection system in the unincorporated County including Wrightsville Sound. Private waste collection services are contracted by homeowners and businesses in this area. This arrangement is presently adequate and will probably continue. The collected solid waste is disposed of in the County incinerator or, if the unit is down for repairs, in the County landfill. These County facilities are deemed adequate for current and future needs. The County has increased the capacity of the incinerator to match projected demands.

Over the past few years, the State of North Carolina has required, and then relaxed, standards for recycling and waste reduction at the local government level. Regardless of these requirements, the Town of Wrightsville Beach has been a leader in the development and implementation of a voluntary recycling program. The Town has set up a recycling center on Seawater Drive near the Police and Fire Departments.

6.2.6 Police Protection

The Town's Police Department staff presently consists of 19 sworn officers, 4 desk officers, one secretary and one animal control officer for a total of 25 full-time employees. During the summer of 1990, the Town added one part-time police officer to patrol the beach strand during the peak summer season. The Police Department is also augmented by a reserve consisting of five officers, all of whom are volunteers.

The Department has nine patrolling automobiles (marked and unmarked), an animal truck, a parking meter truck, and a life guard truck.

The Department offers law enforcement services ranging from investigative services to patrol of residential and commercial property. The Police Department also maintains radio communications with the drawbridge. The Department presently has an emergency response time of less than three minutes and a non-emergency response time of five minutes.

The Police Department Headquarters is located at 321 Causeway Drive in the Municipal complex on Harbor Island.

The New Hanover County Sheriff's Department serves the Wrightsville Sound area. The unincorporated areas of the County are divided into twelve (12) service sectors. Each sector is patrolled by the Sheriff's deputies, with a total of 52 marked and unmarked vehicles. County law enforcement is generally considered adequate in the Wrightsville Sound area.

Police protection services in the planning area are adequate to meet present needs. However, through to the planning horizon of the year 2006, additional staff and vehicles will be required to keep pace with increasing day visitors population, and traffic.

6.2.7 Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Fire protection within the corporate limits of the Town of Wrightsville Beach is provided by its municipal Fire Department, with the goal of vigilance to good protection and mitigating fire loss potential. The Town of Wrightsville Beach provides fire protection service for the satellite annexed areas on the same basis and in the same manner as such services are provided within the rest of Wrightsville Beach. The Department provides first response, EMT-D based emergency medical services as well.

The Wrightsville Beach Fire Department is headquartered at the Municipal complex on Harbor Island. The Department is staffed by ten, paid personnel with three men, for the most part, assigned to a rotating 24 hour shift. Qualified part time shift persons are used as much as possible to fulfill the objective of minimal three-person manning.

The Town's present fire rating classification is 4. This high rating also extends to the Wrightsville Sound annexation area. The Town's fire station and facilities are adequate to provide services to the present Town limits including the Wrightsville Sound satellite annexation areas. Major fire equipment includes:

- **1983, 1,250 gpm pumper** with 50 feet telesquirt master stream - 500 gallon tank; 600 feet of 5-inch supply; 700 feet of 3-inch attack/supply; 200 feet of 2.5 inch attack; 400 feet 1.75-inch attack.

- **1988, 1,250 gpm pumper** with 5-inch hose capacity.

- **1996, 1500 gpm pumper/aerial** with 300 gallon tank; 1500 feet 5-inch supply; 1000 feet 75' aerial; 400 feet 2.5-inch preconnect attack; 200 feet 1.75 inch and 200 feet 2 inch preconnect attack.

- **Pickup truck** for equipment, logistical support and primary EMS squad.

The Department has developed an in-house intern program and training facility which includes a fire training structure, test/draft tank, and, drying and ladder training facilities.

The response time for the Fire Department within the present corporate limits is within four minutes to the farthest points at the north and south ends of Wrightsville Island. Response time to the Galleria Mall at the western end of the Wrightsville Sound area is within three minutes. These response times represent off-season traffic conditions which exist between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Traffic congestion which can be expected in summer months may affect the response time of the firefighters.

New Hanover County has developed a Fire Service District for its unincorporated areas, funded by a separate property tax. There are eight (8) volunteer fire departments serving the unincorporated areas. The Wrightsville Sound area lies within the Seagate Fire District. A County-wide mutual assistance agreement exists between all fire departments to help insure adequate services in extreme situations.

The increasing population over the past several years and the trend toward larger homes and multifamily housing at Wrightsville Beach reinforces the need to maintain adequate equipment, water reserves, and man power for firefighting. While the Town's water storage system (see Section 6.2.2) provides adequate fire flow capacity, current growth patterns present an increasing consistency of heavier required fire flows being created more uniformly throughout the community.

In addition, the number of volunteer firefighters available may not always be sufficient to meet ISO standards for required fire flow. Despite community growth and minimal fire partitioning, average volunteer response has remained constant for many years.

The Town will need to continually evaluate the need for additional manpower (recruitment and retention), and training will help the department maintain its Class 4 rating and meet the increasing demand it faces. Engines and firefighting equipment will also need to be maintained and upgraded as needs dictate.

6.2.8 Parks and Recreational Facilities

In addition to beach access facilities (see Section 4.1), the Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation Department operates one 13-acre park and five "mini-parks". The mini-parks range in size from .5 to .85 of an acre and are located on both Harbor Island and the barrier island portion of the Town.

Generally, the outdoor facilities are adequate to handle the resident population of Wrightsville Beach. Day visitors also come from surrounding areas to visit the 13-acre park. These facilities are summarized below and their locations are shown on the *Recreation Facilities, 1996 Map,* which accompanies this plan.

(1) **Wrightsville Beach Park:** 13-acre park with tennis courts/backwall, sand volleyball courts, basketball court, shuffleboard courts, horseshoes, one softball field, soccer/football field, jogging/fitness trail, tot lot, children's playground area and equipment, overlook deck and picnic shelter with grilles, 104-car parking lot.
(2) **Fran Russ Recreation Center:** Adjacent to the park area and Town Hall, this building provides indoor areas for recreation and programs, room for community meetings and events, and has a fully equipped kitchen.
(3) **Old No. 2 Fire Station**—also used for indoor recreational programs.
(4) **Lees Nature Park:** .5 acre nature-oriented park for plant and bird identification.
(5) **Greensboro Street Park:** .8-acre park with playground equipment.
(6) **Wynn Plaza:** .85-acre park on Banks Channel provides public "transient" dockage, a gazebo, and waterfront walkways.
(7) **South Channel Drive Park:** .5-acre park on Banks Channel for water-oriented activities.
(8) **Island Drive Park:** .5-acre park with benches for passive atmosphere.
(9) **Causeway Park:** .5-acre park with benches located at the street under the bridge.
(10) **Wings Plaza:** Landscaped area with benches for passive uses, located in the downtown area across from Wynn Plaza.

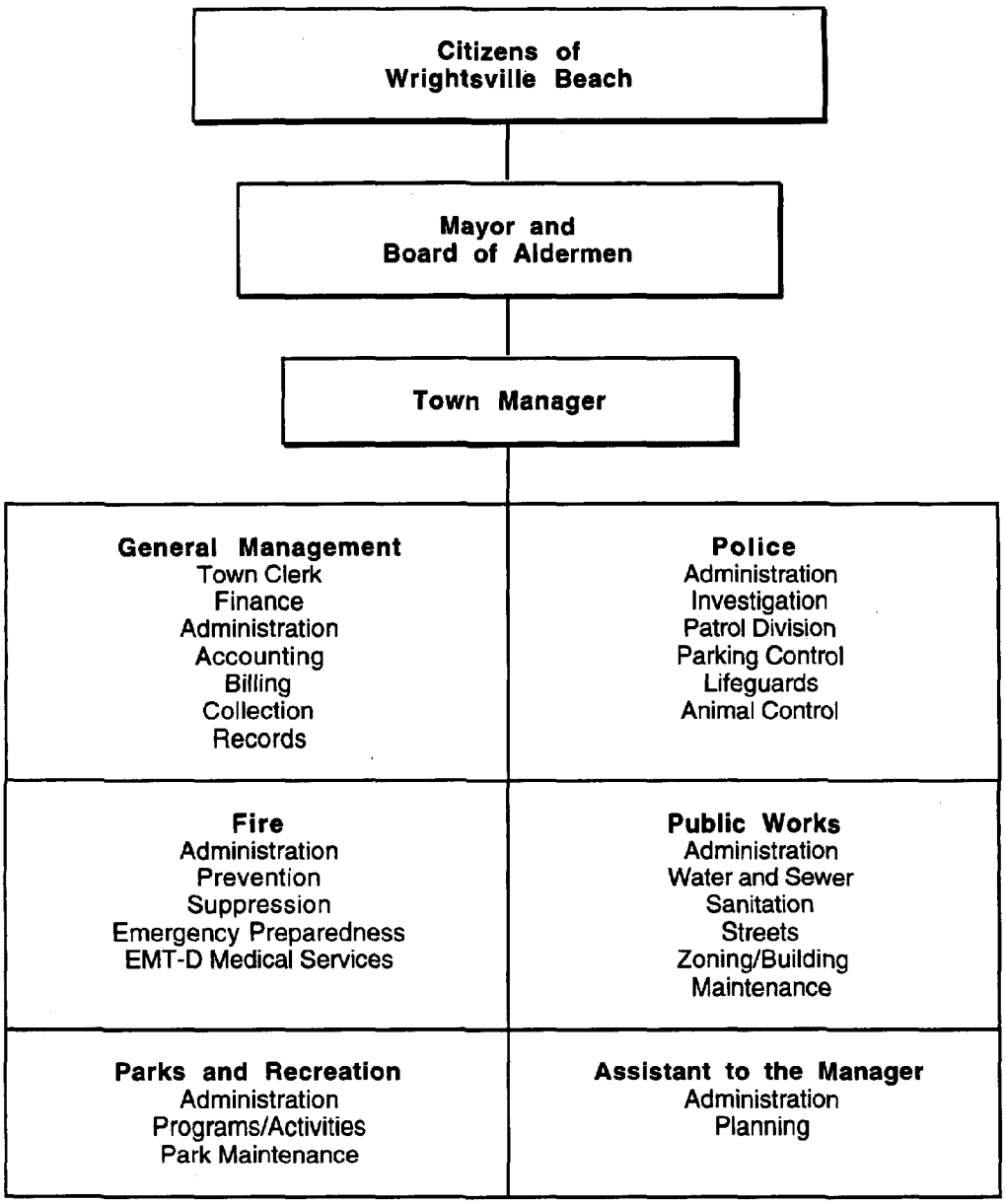
While no significant additions of park acreage are anticipated through the year 2006, there will be continued demand to make more intensive use of existing facilities and to add additional facilities at existing park sites. Such facilities may need to address for example, an expanded senior citizens population and the types of recreational activities best suited to that age group.

6.2.9 Public Administrative Capability

The Town of Wrightsville Beach was incorporated in 1899. The Town has a Council-Manager form of government. The Board of Aldermen consists of a Mayor and four Aldermen elected at large every four years with staggered terms. The Mayor is elected for a two-year term. The Board of Aldermen is the governing body of the Town with the Mayor as a voting member and the presiding officer. The Town Manager is appointed by the Board of Aldermen and administers the daily operations of the Town as well as being responsible for implementing and explaining the policies of the Board of Aldermen.

The Town provides a full range of services. These services include police and fire protection, sanitation, the construction and maintenance of streets and infrastructure, beach rescue, first responder/defibrillator medical service and parks and recreation. The Town also provides water and wastewater services. The existing structure of government at Wrightsville Beach is performing its necessary functions well and there is no anticipation regarding major changes in the form or size of local government in the Town. The administrative structure of the Town is presented below.

Town of Wrightsville Beach
Organization



7. Estimated Demand

7.1 Population and Economic Projections

7.1.1 Projections of Permanent Population

Population projections for Wrightsville Beach are an extrapolation from overall County-wide growth trends and historic patterns over the past several decades. (See Section 5.1.1 Population and Housing) The projections assume that the number of housing units being added to the County's housing stock will resume a more normal rate of increase of 2000 units per year, down from the current torrid pace of 3000 units annually. At the same time, additions to the housing stock at Wrightsville Beach will continue to hold the town's population level steady at about 2% of the County total. Tendencies toward greater year round occupancy at Wrightsville Beach will be offset by economic forces (obtainable rents, property taxes) which will increase incentives for rental properties.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Year	Wrightsville Beach	% of County Population	New Hanover County
1960	723	1.0	71,742
1970	1,701	2.1	82,996
1980	2,786	2.7	102,779
1990	2,937	2.4	120,284
1995 Estimate	3,114	2.2	139,577
2000 Projection	3,200	2.0	160,000
2010 Projection	3,450	2.0	176,000

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1960 through 1990, North Carolina Office of Budget and Management, New Hanover County Planning Department, and Glenn Harbeck Associates.

Projections of Seasonal/Peak Day Population

With the advent of Interstate-40 and the tremendous growth of the permanent population of New Hanover County since 1990, estimates of peak day population range as high as 50,000 by the year 2000 (from a 1996 level of approximately 35,000 to 40,000—See Section 5.3, Impact of Seasonal Population). Because available parking space typically reaches the saturation level by mid-morning on a peak summer day, continued increases in peak day population will be dependent in the future upon higher vehicle occupancy levels, shuttle services, public transportation, and other methods.

7.1.2 Economic Projections

Section 5.1.2 of this plan provided a comparative examination of the employment characteristics of Wrightsville Beach residents as opposed to New Hanover County residents. This comparison revealed no remarkable differences between the employment patterns and occupations of Wrightsville Beach residents and County residents. Due to Wrightsville Beach 's increasing role as a residential "bedroom community" for the Greater Wilmington area, the Town's economic outlook is apt to continue to reflect the overall economic prospects for New Hanover County. In the absence of a major national economic downturn, such prospects, as described frequently by economists at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, as well as by several financial institutions in the State, call for continued economic growth and prosperity for the Greater Wilmington area for the foreseeable future. Such continued advances in economic growth for the region can only result in increasing demand for properties at Wrightsville Beach and continued inflationary pressures on real estate values, rents, and taxes, relative to the balance of the region.

7.2 Future Land Use Needs

Because virtually all developable land at Wrightsville Beach is either currently in use, projections of future land use needs are not relevant. Nonetheless, it is important to note that development pressures at Wrightsville Beach continue, with special emphasis on redevelopment for residential use. As real estate values continue to mount and commercial services become more readily available on the mainland side of the drawbridge, pressure for displacement of commercial uses by residential development has become increasingly evident. This land use plan recommends that policies be implemented which seek to preserve the existing commercial/residential balance of development at Wrightsville Beach.

7.3 Demand for Community Facilities and Services

For the sake of uninterrupted analysis and continuity of presentation, a discussion of community facilities demands is included in each of the community facility evaluations provided in Section 6.2 of this plan.

8. Policy Statements

Introduction to the Policies

The data collection and analysis described in Sections 4 through 7 of this plan was geared to gathering and summarizing information related to the future development and redevelopment of the Town of Wrightsville Beach. Building on this information, a series of official local government policies are hereby set forth. As officially adopted policies of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, they serve as the basis for future decisions on land use, development and capital improvements.

Policy Format

Each major category in the policy section of the land use plan is addressed according to the following format:

Discussion A brief summary of the issues, relevant findings and, where applicable, alternative policy responses.

Policy Statement **Statement(s) of local government principal designed to achieve legitimate public objectives related to the issue.**

In addition, Section 12.1 of this Plan, entitled the Action Agenda, includes a number of potential Implementation ***Actions*** designed to carry out the Policies of the Land Use Plan over the next five years.

It is important to understand that the narrative (discussion) is not policy, and does not carry the same degree of importance as the actual policy statements. The narrative is designed to provide background and rationale for the ensuing policy statement. In most instances, the discussion serves to identify a problem or issue, and may present a summary of findings from other technical studies. There is no intent to establish policy within any discussion section. More detailed discussions of issues related to policies are found in the earlier information sections of the Plan.

The policy statements, on the other hand, must be viewed in a wholly different light. As statements of local government principle, the policies should remain substantially unchanged during the five year planning period. Frequent changes to the policies would undermine their effectiveness in achieving intended goals and objectives. Indeed, the policies are designed to maintain a consistent and predictable direction for local government decisions affecting local growth and development during the planning period. In reviewing the pages that follow, the reader is asked to focus greatest attention on the policies, while relying upon the discussion primarily as explanations as to intent.

8.0 General Vision Policy for Next Ten Years

The CAMA Land Use Planning Guidelines suggest that the policy section begin with an overall guiding policy regarding future growth and development. The Town of Wrightsville Beach is generally known throughout the coastal area as having a high quality of life highlighted by its proximity to the services of the Wilmington urban area, and the quality of its natural and built environment. The Town has also been successful in directing development and redevelopment in keeping with a small town, family-oriented community. The following policy statement emphasizes the need for diligence in working to retain the these quality features.

Policy 8.0 General Vision Policy for Next Ten Years

We, the residents, business, & property owners of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, shall seek to maintain & enhance our community as one of the finest family-oriented beach towns on the east coast of the United States. To do so will require diligence in working to retain the small town character & quality of the natural & man-made environment that has become the basis for our quality of life at Wrightsville Beach, & which makes our community such a desirable place for both visitors & residents alike.

8.1 Resource Protection Policies

8.1.0 Resource Protection Policies

Most residents of Wrightsville Beach, when asked at public meetings to identify those features that make Wrightsville Beach special, talked about such things as: the natural habitat for wildlife, good fishing, clean air and water, natural beauty, and water quality. These are the features of the community that make Wrightsville Beach such a unique place, and are so deserving of protection.

Policy 8.1.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Resource Protection

The natural and scenic resources of Wrightsville Beach are the reason for our existence and attractiveness as a community, for the value of our properties, and for the quality of our lives. It shall be the policy of Town not to undertake activities, nor approve of any activities, in singular or cumulative effect, which would jeopardize the long term viability of our natural and scenic resources. Furthermore, actions should have the effect of protecting and enhancing the quality of such resources whenever possible.

(Note: In keeping with this policy, the Town shall consider each proposed development activity for its individual impact on natural and scenic resources. For example, while the addition of a single "privacy wall" blocking views to the water's edge may not have a significant impact on views and vistas to the water, the cumulative impact of a great many such walls would eventually have a profound adverse effect on scenic views to the water throughout the town.)

8.1.1 Constraints to Development

Development activities at Wrightsville Beach are constrained by a variety of natural and manmade limiting factors, as discussed in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of this plan. Of the various natural limitations on development in the town, the issue of storm water runoff and drainage is among the most significant. Without appropriate development standards, more development typically means more impervious surfaces. In turn, more impervious surfaces can result in more storm water runoff into the sounds or onto adjacent properties. Fortunately, the Town has been active in addressing this issue, and has put in place standards which require stormwater retention on site.

Another natural constraint to development at Wrightsville Beach, though one more readily accepted than the storm water runoff problem, is flooding. The entirety of both Harbor Island and the Outer Island are subject to total inundation during the 100 year storm. As older structures have been replaced over the years, the Town has been successful in implementing new construction standards that elevate most substantial improvements above the 100 year flood level. The effectiveness of this policy was especially evident in the aftermath of hurricane Fran.

In addition to drainage standards and 100 year flood plain standards, properties in the Town of Wrightsville Beach are also subject to the permitting requirements of the Division of Coastal Management, the Army

Corps of Engineers as related to wetlands, the Town's Zoning and Pier Head Line Ordinances, and the Town Dune Maintenance Protection Plan. The standards promulgated in each of these areas are important in protecting specific resources at Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.1.1 A Appropriate, Corrective Drainage Improvements

Development will not be allowed where poor drainage or seasonal flooding exists unless appropriate corrective improvements are to be completed as part of the project. Appropriate corrective improvements shall be defined as those which solve the drainage problem without increasing stormwater runoff on adjacent properties or in area waters, whether directly or indirectly.

Policy 8.1.1 B Application of Federal, State, and Local Controls

Allowable land uses in areas posing physical constraints should be only those approved through, where applicable, the Division of Coastal Management (CAMA), the Army Corps of Engineers "404" permitting processes, the Town's Zoning and Pierhead Line Ordinances, and the Town Dune Maintenance and Protection Plan.

Policy 8.1.1 C Development in the 100 Year Floodplain

Development shall be permissible in the 100-year flood zone, provided that all new construction and substantial improvements comply strictly with CAMA regulations and the Town's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

8.1.2 Areas of Environmental Concern

The Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) of North Carolina calls for the identification of certain environmentally fragile and important land and water areas that are judged to be of greater than local significance. The Coastal Resources Commission (CRC), in cooperation with local governments in the twenty county coastal area, has developed a program of permit review within these areas of environmental concern (AEC's) . The intent of the regulatory program is not to stop development , but rather to insure the compatibility of the development with the continued productivity and value of certain critical land and water areas. Each basic AEC category is summarized below with the applicable policy statement immediately following. The reader is urged to consult with the full definition and State-promulgated use standards of each AEC category before contemplating development in these areas.

Policy 8.1.2 Areas Of Environmental Concern

The Town will support and enforce, through its CAMA Minor Permitting capacity, the State policies and permitted uses in the Areas of Environmental Concern (AEC's). Such uses shall be in accord with the general use standards for coastal wetlands, estuarine waters, estuarine shorelines, and public trust areas as stated in 15A NCAC Subchapter 7H.

Note: The first four AEC's described below together make up the so-called estuarine system AEC's: Coastal Wetlands, Estuarine Waters, Estuarine Shorelines, and Public Trust Waters. They are presented as a system of AEC's due to the strong degree to which they are ecologically interrelated.

8.1.2 A Coastal Wetland AEC'S

Coastal wetland AEC's are marshes, subject to regular or occasional flooding by tides, including normal wind tides. At Wrightsville Beach, these are predominantly salt water marshes associated with the sounds and intracoastal waterway. These marshlands serve as a critical component in the coastal ecosystem. The marsh is the basis for the high productivity of the estuary which is the primary input source for the food chain of the entire coastal environment. Estuarine dependent species of fish and shellfish, such as menhaden, shrimp, flounder, oysters, and crabs, contribute tremendous value to the economy of North Carolina's commercial and recreational fisheries.

Marsh plants found in coastal wetlands include saltwater Cordgrass (Spartina alterniflora), Black Needlerush (Juncus roemerianus), Glasswort (Salicornia, spp.), Salt Grass (Distichlis spicata), Sea

Lavender (Limonium, spp.), Salt Meadow Grass (Spartina patens), and Salt Reed Grass (Spartina cynosuroides). The roots and rhizomes and seeds of the marsh grasses serve as food for waterfowl, and the stems as wildlife nesting material. The tidal marsh also serves as the first line of defense in retarding estuarine shoreline erosion. The plant stems and leaves tend to dissipate wave action while the vast network of roots resists soil erosion. Coastal wetlands operate additionally as traps for sediments, nutrients and pollutants originating from upland runoff. Siltation of the estuarine bottom is reduced, and pollutants and excess nutrients are absorbed by the plants. These marshes should be considered unsuitable for all development and for those land uses which would alter their natural functions.

Policy 8.1.2 A Coastal Wetlands

Due to the critical role that wetlands play in protecting the quality of estuarine waters and in providing habitat for fish and wildlife, the Town strongly supports the designation and preservation of all remaining coastal wetlands. Acceptable land uses may include utility easements, fishing piers, and docks. Examples of uses NOT permitted include restaurants, businesses, residences, apartments, motels, hotels, parking lots, private roads, and highways.

8.1.2 B Estuarine Water AEC'S

An estuary is a semi-enclosed water body having free connection with the open sea and within which sea water is measurably diluted with fresh water drained from the adjacent land. The immense productivity of estuarine waters results largely from unique circulation patterns, nutrient trapping mechanisms, and the protective habitats they provide. Estuarine circulation, influenced by tidal currents, fresh water influx, and shallow bottom depth, keeps the estuarine waters well flushed, dispersing nutrients, juvenile stages, and wastes. In their natural state, these waters provide many diverse and productive habitats. Common features in estuarine waters include mud flats, eel grass beds, clam and oyster beds, and fish and shellfish nursery areas.

At Wrightsville Beach, estuarine waters are found in the Intracoastal Waterway and throughout the sound area. At the northern and southern limits of the Town's jurisdiction, these waters are generally classified SA, suitable for shellfishing . Areas near Harbor Island are generally SB, with the exception of the north shore, which is SA. Masonboro Sound was nominated and designated as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) by the state. Primary and secondary nursery areas are located between the mainland and the island in the Shell Island and Bradley Creek areas, and Bradley Creek.

The high value of commercial and sports fisheries and the aesthetic appeal of coastal North Carolina are dependent upon the conservation and protection of its estuarine waters. Appropriate uses in and around estuarine waters are those which preserve estuarine waters so as to safeguard and perpetuate their biological, economic and aesthetic values. Acceptable uses should be water dependent uses, such as navigable channels, piers and docks, and mooring pilings, provided that they do not directly or indirectly block or impair existing navigation channels, increase shoreline erosion, deposit spoils below mean high tide, cause adverse water circulation patterns, violate water quality standards or cause degradation of shellfish waters. In keeping with this objective, the Town's policy statement concerning estuarine waters discourages the expansion or construction of new marinas.

Policy 8.1.2 B Estuarine Waters

(1) Appropriate uses within estuarine waters may include simple access channels, structures which prevent erosion, navigational channels, and private boat docks, piers, and mooring pilings. Expansion or construction of new marinas is discouraged. Piers and docks for non-water dependent commercial uses are not allowed (NCAC 15A 7H).

(2) Any development or activity which will profoundly and adversely affect coastal and estuarine waters will not be allowed. In the design, construction and operation of water dependent structures, efforts must be made to mitigate negative effects on water quality and fish habitat, as determined by NCAC 15A Subchapter 7H and the Coastal Resources Commission. The developer and/or owner will bear the cost of any required mitigation.

8.1.2 C Public Trust Waters AEC'S

Pubic Trust Waters at Wrightsville Beach generally are all ocean and estuarine waters from the mean high water mark to the seaward limit of State jurisdiction. The State of North Carolina supports the traditional public rights of access to and use of Public Trust Waters for purposes including navigation, fishing, and recreation. These areas support valuable commercial and sports fisheries, have aesthetic value, and are important resources for economic development. Navigation channels, piers, marinas, and bulkheads to control erosion are examples of uses which may be found acceptable in Public Trust Waters.

An issue of growing concern at Wrightsville Beach and on recreational waters throughout the nation, has been the advent of the jet ski and other similar personal water craft. Concerns have been raised regarding the tendencies of jet skiers to operate these watercraft in a reckless manner. Other concerns relate to their operation in marshes and other shallow water estuaries, where damage to the marsh may occur and where wildfowl is disturbed. Locally, New Hanover County has been taking the lead in coordinating the efforts of various local governments in working with the jet ski industry in developing standards for the operation of these watercraft.

A second issue of special concern at Wrightsville Beach, particularly at the north end of the Outer Island, is the trend toward lengthy piers extending out into the town's estuarine waters. As prime waterfront sites—those with deep water close to shore—have become developed, remaining "waterfront" sites have been building longer piers to reach water of adequate depth for boat dockage. This oftentimes results in unsightly and environmentally damaging piers extending out into the coastal marsh. And, while State regulations require that such piers shall not block stream channels, the effect in many instances is to inhibit the movement of water craft in the shallow water estuary. This can be evident at high tide when small boats, which would normally have free movement through the estuary, must constrain their navigation to limited pockets of open water, essentially fenced in by these long pier lengths. In the case of small shallow draft sailing craft, the presence of these long piers may totally prevent the craft from sailing through the affected body of water. Thus, the Town's policy reserves the right to be more restrictive than the State's standards where the public's right to the reasonable, unobstructed use of public trust waters is being compromised.

Policy 8.1.2 C Public Trust Areas

(1) Any use which significantly interferes with the public right of navigation or other public trust rights shall be strongly discouraged. Projects which would directly or indirectly block or impair existing navigational channels, increase shoreline erosion, deposit spoils below mean high water (except during beach renourishment), cause adverse water circulation patterns, violate water quality standards, or cause degradation of shellfish waters shall be prohibited.

(2) The Town shall seek to ensure the responsible use of jet skis and other similar "personal" watercraft within the public trust waters of Wrightsville Beach. Responsible use shall mean controlled, predictable movements similar to other powered watercraft while in navigation channels, marinas, and other regularly trafficked areas, and their prohibition in marshes and other shallow water estuaries, where damage to the resource is likely.

(3) CAMA standards designed to limit the length of docks and piers as they project into public trust waters shall be considered the minimum standards, with the Town reserving the right to be more restrictive where public trust waters use and environmental protection issues warrant.

8.1.2 D Estuarine Shoreline AEC'S

Estuarine Shorelines are non-ocean shorelines extending from the mean high water level along the Town's estuarine sounds for a distance of 75 feet landward. Although characterized as dry land and thus potentially "developable", estuarine shorelines are considered a component of the estuarine system because of the close association with adjacent estuarine waters. These shorelines may be especially

vulnerable to erosion, flooding, or other adverse affects of wind and water and are intimately connected to the estuary.

Because development within the estuarine shoreline AEC can harm the marshlands and estuarine waters, and because of the inherent dynamic and hazardous nature of coastal shorelines, specific restrictions, limitations and standards have been adopted by the State for construction in these areas, as outlined in 15A NCAC 7H at .0209. By regulation, projects cannot weaken natural barriers to erosion, shall have limited impervious surfaces, and shall take measures to prevent pollution of the estuary by sedimentation and runoff. A CAMA (Coastal Area Management Act) permit must also be obtained for compliance with these standards.

As in the case of estuarine waters, the Town of Wrightsville Beach wishes to discourage additional marina development in these areas.

Policy 8.1.2 D Estuarine Shorelines

Marina development or expansion is discouraged along estuarine shorelines. However, residential, recreational, research and educational, and commercial land uses are all appropriate types of use along the estuarine shoreline, provided that all standards of NCAC 15 Subchapter 7H relevant to estuarine shoreline AEC's are met, and that the proposed use is consistent with policies set forth in this Plan.

8.1.2E Ocean Hazard Area AEC'S

These are natural hazard areas along the ocean shoreline which are especially vulnerable to effects of sand, wind, water and erosion. Ocean hazard areas include beaches, frontal dunes, inlet lands, and other areas in which geologic, vegetative and soil conditions indicate a substantial possibility of excessive erosion or flood damage, and where uncontrolled or incompatible development could unreasonable endanger life or property. Improper development can also disturb the natural barrier island dynamics and sediment transport, and can interfere with the beach's natural defenses against erosion. Furthermore, there is considerable evidence that sea level has been and is expected to continue rising steadily. This will result in higher water levels, inundation of wetland areas, and loss of beachfront area.

Within the Ocean Hazard Area AEC are four sub areas as follows: (1) The ocean erodible area (2) The high hazard flood area (3) The inlet hazard area and (4) The unvegetated beach area. Each may be described as follows:

• Ocean Erodible AEC. The ocean erodible area is the portion of the island where there exists a substantial possibility of excessive erosion and significant shoreline fluctuation. The ocean erodible AEC is based on a setback from the first line of stable natural vegetation plus an additional area where erosion can be expected from storm surges and wave action. This area includes the ocean beaches and the frontal dune system.

Ocean erodible areas are extremely dynamic lands highly susceptible to becoming displaced by the ocean due to erosion, storms, and sea level rise. The sand deposits of ocean beaches and shorelines represent a dynamic zone which does not afford long term protection for development. The nature of tidal action and the force of storms is such that they cause the beach areas to constantly shift. In addition, littoral drift is a natural phenomenon whereby sand is removed from beaches by wave action and littoral currents and is deposited upon a different stretch of the beach.

The major management objective is to avoid unnecessary hazards to life or property and to maintain reasonable requirements for public expenditures to protect property or maintain safe conditions. This area must be preserved to the greatest extent feasible with opportunity to enjoy the ocean beaches of the State. Appropriate development within the area must be that which will withstand the prevalent natural forces, comply with CAMA and other state requirements, and not unreasonably interfere with the public's use and enjoyment of the beach area.

• High Hazard Flood AEC. This is the area of the coast subject to high velocity wave action and storm surge during severe storms. This area typically extends along the shoreline and to some distance landward of

the frontal dune. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies flood zones for a "100 year" storm on the flood insurance rate maps (F.I.R.M.'s), and designates the high hazard flood AEC as the V zone. The interior of the outer island, Harbor Island, and the Sound are in the A Zone, subject to washover and flooding. The entire Town of Wrightsville Beach lies within the 100-year flood area. The extent of flood hazard areas on Wrightsville Beach and in Wrightsville Sound area is shown on the Fragile Areas, 1996 map.

• Inlet Hazard AEC. Inlet Hazard areas of environmental concern are especially vulnerable to erosion, flooding, and other shoreline changes due to their proximity to extremely dynamic, migrating coastal inlets. The inlet hazard area is defined to "extend landward from the mean low water line a distance sufficient to encompass that area within which the inlet will, based on statistical analysis, migrate, and shall consider such factors as previous inlet territory, structurally weak areas near the inlet (such as an unusually narrow barrier island, an unusually long channel feeding the inlet, or an overwash area), and external influences such as jetties and channelization." The State's original inlet hazard areas were identified in the report to the CRC entitled "Inlet Hazard Area" by Loie J. Priddy and Rick Carraway (September 1978). The inlet hazard area "shall be an extension of the adjacent ocean erodible area and in no case shall the width of the inlet hazard area be less than the width of the adjacent ocean erodible area."

At Wrightsville Beach, areas adjacent to both the Mason Inlet and Masonboro Inlet are designated hazard areas. Within the past year, considerable attention has been focused statewide on the situation regarding the Shell Island Resort at the north end of Wrightsville Beach. Recently, the owners of this major resort sought permission to place sandbags to stop the southward migration of Masons Inlet toward the Shell Island Resort until a more permanent solution could be found. The State Coastal Resources Commission voted in January of 1997 to approve the temporary placement of sand bags more extensive than what is normally permitted under CAMA standards.

• Unvegetated Beach AEC. These areas are fragile, unstable and unpredictable areas of barrier islands. They are subject to rapid changes from wind and wave action. They include the sand reaches often found near inlets and undeveloped beach strands. As in other beach areas, the public maintains a right to access to these beaches. While there are some small areas of unvegetated beach at Wrightsville Beach, there is no unvegetated beach AEC recognized by the Coastal Resources Commission within the Town.

Policy 8.1.2 E Ocean Hazard Areas of Environmental Concern

(1) The Town supports State policies for ocean hazard areas as set forth in Chapter 15A, Subchapter 7H of the State CAMA regulations. Suitable land uses in ocean hazard areas include ocean shoreline erosion control activities and dune establishment and stabilization. Residential, commercial, and recreational land uses and parking lots for beach access are also acceptable types of use in ocean hazard areas, provided that they meet all general and specific use standards of 15A: 7H.

(2) The Town supports the policies and regulations of State and Federal permitting agencies concerning the development of ocean piers, and shall encourage the proper maintenance and safety of such piers.

8.1.3 Turtle Nesting Areas

The nesting habits of the loggerhead turtle are a unique natural phenomenon of coastal communities like Wrightsville Beach. Opportunities for the study of loggerhead turtle nesting are becoming more rare. In keeping with the Town's overall growth philosophy of preserving those natural features that are truly a unique part of the heritage of the island community, the Town wishes to make a strong policy statement in support of preserving and protecting the habitat for loggerhead turtle nesting.

Policy 8.1.3 Turtle Nesting Areas

The Town shall avoid undertaking any activity or approving of any activity which would destroy remaining habitat for loggerhead turtle nesting.

8.1.4 A Other Wetlands

Not too long ago in the United States wetlands where viewed as "wastelands" to be filled in and made "usable". Today, both the scientific community and the general population recognize the critical importance of wetlands in providing habitat for many, many forms of wildlife and in helping to mitigate the severity of flooding and shoreline erosion. For this reason, the Town wishes to go on record regarding its support for the designation and preservation of all wetlands in its planning jurisdiction.

Policy 8.1.4 A Other Wetlands

The Town supports the designation and preservation of all wetlands.

8.1.4 B Maritime Forest and Tree Cover

According to a report published by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management in November of 1988 (An Assessment Of Maritime Forest Resources On The North Carolina Coast, Michael J. Lopazanski, et al) Maritime forests are the woody plant communities that develop as the end result of primary succession on coastal dune systems. The report further notes that maritime forests are generally restricted to coastal barrier islands. Unfortunately, the maritime forest, as a distinct environmental entity, has been largely eliminated at Wrightsville Beach. Even so, tree cover at Wrightsville Beach, whether officially maritime forest or not, is considered a highly valued asset. Some sections of Harbor Island, in particular, are blessed with a sizable number of significant trees that are worthy of attention and preservation.

Policy 8.1.4 B Maritime Forest and Tree Cover

Tree cover at Wrightsville Beach, whether maritime or otherwise, is a highly valued asset. The Town encourages efforts to preserve existing tree cover in new development and redevelopment.

8.1.4 C Outstanding Resource Waters

There are currently no Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) within the planning jurisdiction of the Town of Wrightsville Beach. On the other hand, there are areas north and south of the town's estuarine waters that have received the ORW designation. In the case of Wrightsville Beach, stormwater runoff from landside development and the presence of a large number of marinas and boat traffic are the most likely causes of water quality degradation in the Wrightsville Beach area. Given current trends at Wrightsville Beach toward even more intensive development and impervious surface areas, it is unlikely that the waters around Wrightsville Beach would be likely to receive the ORW designation. On the other hand, the Town wishes to do its part in controlling storm drainage and stormwater runoff so that Outstanding Resource Waters within the general area of New Hanover County are not adversely affected.

Policy 8.1.4 C Outstanding Resource Water Areas

The Town supports and encourages the designation and preservation of Outstanding Resource Waters. The Town promotes surface water quality through its storm drainage and stormwater runoff policies.

8.1.4 D Shellfishing Waters

For a number of years, the Town of Wrightsville Beach operated its own central sewage treatment plant and emptied its treated effluent into the sound area behind Shell Island. As a result, much of the water in the sound behind the Outer Island was closed to shell fishing. However, with the advent of the New Hanover County Centralized sewer system, and the tie in of Wrightsville Beach to that system, the waters around much of Wrightsville Beach have recovered. This has allowed many of these waters to be designated once more as suitable for shellfishing. Particular areas not suitable for shellfishing are specifically posted by the State shellfish authorities.

Policy 8.1.4 D Shellfishing Waters

The Town supports and encourages the activities of the State's Shellfish Management Program. The Town promotes estuarine water quality through its storm drainage planning and stormwater runoff policies.

8.1.4 E Water Supply Areas and Other Waters with Special Values

As noted in section 6.2.2 of this report (Drinking Water Supply), the Town of Wrightsville Beach relies upon the Castle Hayne Aquifer for its source of water. Over the years, the Town has worked to continually improve upon and expand the quality and pumping capacity of its system of wells. This has resulted in, for example, the placement of wells in the Wrightsville Sound area of mainland New Hanover County. The Town recognizes the critical importance of maintaining reasonable pumping rates for each of its wells. The Town also recognizes that nearly all of southeastern North Carolina now depends on either the Castle Hayne Aquifer or the Cape Fear River for its potable water. Therefore, the Town supports regional efforts to protect the water quality of both the Castle Hayne Aquifer and the Cape Fear River.

Policy 8.1.4 E Water Supply Areas and Other Waters with Special Values

The Town encourages regional efforts to protect the water quality of the Castle Hayne aquifer and the Cape Fear River as sources of potable water.

8.1.4 F Cultural and Historic Resources

The State Division of Archives and History has noted that areas along the sound shoreline, particularly along Bradley Creek and the mainland side of the Intracoastal Waterway, may have a higher than average probability for containing archaeological sites. In fact, at least two prehistoric archaeological sites have been documented in the Wrightsville Sound area. Archaeological sites at Wrightsville Beach proper are less likely, and if present would have been long ago destroyed by development and redevelopment activities.

In recent years, support for the protection and enhancement of historic structures at Wrightsville Beach has grown in some sectors of the resident population. At the same time, there is a natural dichotomy between those who wish to preserve the historic beach cottage flavor of many of the older structures and those who wish to redevelop these properties with sizable structures at a level commensurate with the dramatically increased value of the real estate. The Town's position is that while it encourages the preservation of its older, potentially historic structures, it cannot reasonably require property owners to do so. The Town has, however, established a vehicle for the property owner to voluntarily have their structure historically designated. Also, while the Town will not attempt to mandate historic preservation, it can establish reasonable standards for redevelopment so that new structures are not grossly out of scale or out of character with remaining older structures. (See Policy 8.3.4)

There is also some debate among residents as to whether there are any historic *commercial* structures at Wrightsville Beach. It could be argued, for example, that most commercial structures in the traditional downtown area have limited architectural merit. In this case, it may be necessary to consider "historic" in terms of an entire cluster of buildings, or in terms of an entire streetscape. Proponents of historic preservation have often said that to remove one building from the streetscape of a downtown block has the effect of creating a "missing tooth" in the face of a street. Thus, while the preservation of particular buildings in this area may be subject to debate, the commitment of the Town to preserve the current commercial use, building set backs, and village atmosphere in this part of the town is clear. (See Policy 8.3.13)

Policy 8.1.4 F Cultural and Historic Resources

The Town encourages the preservation of its older, potentially historic structures, both commercial and residential.

8.1.5 Protection of Potable Water Supply

As noted above under Policy, Section 8.1.4 E (Water Supply Areas) the Town of Wrightsville Beach is dependent upon a system of wells for its potable water. Proper management of this system of wells is

critical for the long term viability of the well system. At the same time, water conservation practices—whether by construction, adaptive plumbing fittings, or behavioral modification—must also be supported.

Policy 8.1.5 Protection Of Potable Water Supply

The Town's groundwater resources shall be conserved for longevity through proper management of its system of wells, and by the encouragement of water conservation practices, including measures which can be taken in construction of all new structures.

8.1.6. Package Sewage Treatment Plants

Package sewage treatment plans have not been an issue in the Town of Wrightsville Beach because the Town, for most of its history, has had access to centralized sewage treatment. Initially, the Town constructed and operated its own centralized treatment plant. Subsequent to that the Town's tied into the New Hanover County centralized sewer system and abandoned its own facility.

Policy 8.1.6 Package Sewage Treatment Plants

All new developments are required to connect to the Town's central sewer system. Package sewage treatment plants and septic systems are not allowed.

8.1.7 Stormwater Runoff

Noted North Carolina hydrogeologist, Ralph C. Heath, when speaking about the coastal area of North Carolina, has stated that the ..."construction...of multi story condominiums, motels and other vacation facilities with their parking lots, tennis courts and swimming pools, is resulting in the creation of large expanses of impervious areas. Disposing of the runoff from these areas during storms in a manner that is not detrimental to the adjacent sounds and ocean is among the most pressing water management problems now confronting the developer and the public officials in this area." (News: Water Resources Research Institute of the University of North Carolina, November 1986).

The construction of large, impervious services associated with commercial and residential development accelerates the rate at which rain waters reach the estuarine sound waters. This rapid influx of fresh water can change the natural salinity of the sound water and disrupt the biological balance of the natural system. The water can also carry higher than normal levels of nutrients and other biodegradable materials that can create excessive oxygen demand for decomposing the material.

Much of what is described above can be observed in the continued redevelopment of the Town of Wrightsville Beach. While it may be too late to return the estuarine waters of the Town back to a pristine condition, the Town continues to seek methods by which storm water runoff from new developments can be minimized. The Town intends to give greater attention to this element of development plan review in the future, with the intent of more carefully controlling stormwater runoff into the estuary.

Policy 8.1.7 Stormwater Runoff

The Town encourages the use of "best management practices" to minimize the release of pollutants to coastal waters through stormwater runoff. Examples include using pervious or semi-pervious materials, such as turfstone or gravel for driveways and walks, retaining natural vegetation along marsh and waterfront areas to retain its natural filtering properties, and allowing stormwater to percolate into the ground rather than discharging it directly to coastal waters. (Note: As policy, the Town will continue to require that the first 4" of rainwater in a 24 hour period be retained on site for all new developments.)

8.1.8 Marinas, Floating Home Development, Mooring and Mooring Fields and Dry Stack Storage

Due to its strategic location in the greater Wilmington/New Hanover urbanizing area, and the long-standing presence of Masonboro Inlet, the Town of Wrightsville Beach has been a natural draw for **marina development**. As a result, the sound and intracoastal waters adjacent to Wrightsville Beach are some of the most congested waters for boating in the entire coastal area of North Carolina. More marinas and more

boat slips also mean increasing demand for landside parking spaces, and increased traffic congestion. For these reasons, the Town wishes to discourage further development of marinas, whether by the addition of new marinas, or by the intensification of existing marinas by creating more boat slips in the same amount of surface water.

Policy 8.1.8 A Marinas, Wet slips

The Town will discourage the expansion and/or intensification of existing marinas and the development of additional marinas, including upland marinas in excavated basins.

Regarding **floating homes**, it is important to define exactly what a floating home is. According to CAMA Guidelines, a floating structure is ..."any structure, not a boat, supported by a means of flotation designed to be used without a permanent foundation, which is used or intended for human habitation or commerce. A structure will be considered a floating structure when it is inhabited or used for commercial purposes for more than 30 days in any one location. A boat may be deemed a floating structure when its means of propulsion has been removed or rendered inoperative and it contains at least 200 square feet of living space area."

Floating home development is viewed by the residents of Wrightsville Beach as a waterborne activity which permanently "consumes" public trust waters which are already in short supply. Potential environmental and aesthetic problems associated with floating structures are also deemed to far outweigh any potential economic benefits for the town.

Policy 8.1.8 B Floating Home Development

Due to the limited amount of public trust waters surrounding Wrightsville Beach and the heavy use of those waters by the public, the Town shall not allow the effective "permanent consumption" of public trust waters by floating homes.

According to CAMA Use Standards, a "**free standing mooring**" is any means to attach a ship, boat, vessel, floating structure or other watercraft to a stationary underwater device, mooring buoy, buoyed anchor, or piling (as long as the piling is not associated with an existing or proposed pier, dock, or boathouse). According to CAMA Standards, free standing moorings shall be permitted under only two circumstances (1) to riparian property owners within their riparian corridors or (2) to any applicant proposing to locate a mooring buoy consistent with a *water use plan* that may be incorporated into either the local zoning or land use plan.

At Wrightsville Beach, concern for the limited amount of public trust waters available for public enjoyment also creates a major disincentive for additional free standing moorings. Until such time as the Town of Wrightsville Beach undertakes the developmental of a *water use plan*, and the issue can be addressed in a comprehensive manner, additional free standing moorings will not be approved.

Policy 8.1.8 C Moorings and Mooring Fields

Additional freestanding moorings of any kind shall not be allowed within the public trust waters of Wrightsville Beach.

Dry stack storage facilities, while deemed preferable to wet slip storage, nonetheless require substantial amounts of associated parking, are significant traffic generators, and contribute to boating congestion on already overtaxed waters. For these reasons, the expansion and development of additional dry stack storage facilities is discouraged at Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.1.8 D Dry Stack Storage

While dry storage of boats by individual owners is preferred over wet slip storage, the Town shall discourage the expansion and development of additional dry stack storage facilities.

Commercial fishing is an important part of the coastal heritage of many communities in eastern North Carolina, including Wrightsville Beach. While the Town is not interested in increasing the size of the commercial fishing fleet in the waters in and around Wrightsville Beach, it is nonetheless committed to preserving this important part of the area's coastal heritage.

Policy 8.1.8 E Commercial Fishing Dockage

Commercial fisheries vessel dockage at currently used commercial facilities along the soundside waterfront is acceptable.

The zoning ordinance of the Town of Wrightsville Beach contains special provisions for what is defined in the ordinance as a **vessel for hire**. The provision requires that any vessel available for hire carrying ten (10) or more passengers must apply for a special use permit as to where it can be docked and conduct it business.

Policy 8.1.8 F Vessels for Hire, Charter Boats and Cruise Ship Dockage

Vessels for hire and charter boats/cruise ships shall only be allowed in conjunction with existing marinas and shall not cause an expansion in the amount of surface water consumed or parking demand generated. Smaller charter and cruise ships shall be preferred over larger.

8.1.9 Industrial Impacts on Fragile Areas

The Town of Wrightsville Beach has a history of very little industrial development. Traditional reasons for lack of industrial development include a lack of sufficient volumes of water and other utilities, a lack of suitable extensive areas of land at reasonable prices, and a general incompatibility with the desired vision of the community by many Wrightsville Beach residents. Opposition to any industrial development at Wrightsville Beach was unanimous at Town meetings arranged to allow for input to the land use plan.

Policy 8.1.9 Industrial Impacts On Fragile Areas

Industrial development of any kind is incompatible with the overall land use pattern, economy, and quality of life at Wrightsville Beach. Therefore, no impact on fragile areas is expected nor will it be allowed.

8.1.10 Development of Sound and Estuarine System Islands

All sound and estuarine islands in the vicinity of Wrightsville Beach have extremely fragile environmental conditions and would be highly unsuited for development. The residents of Wrightsville Beach also have expressed universal support for County and State efforts to preserve Masonboro Island.

Policy 8.1.10 Development Of Sound And Estuarine System Islands

All estuarine sound islands and spoil islands are subject to the conservation (P-1) provisions of the Town's zoning ordinance. The Town also supports all County and State efforts to preserve Masonboro Island.

8.1.11 Development Within Areas That Might Be Susceptible to Sea Level Rise

There has been considerable discussion and debate over the past decade or more about sea level rise and its theoretical affect on beach and shore line erosion along North Carolina's coast. One commonly held viewpoint is that gradual sea level rise is causing the barrier Islands of the North Carolina coast to migrate landward. Under this theory, individual oceanfront land owners are said to experience this migration as "beach erosion". The scientific evidence to support this viewpoint is subject to considerable debate. Regardless of what causes beach erosion, the Town supports a policy of regular beach renourishment as the most practical means of balancing the public's interest in the beach shoreline with the protection of private property investments. In the absence of renourishment, the Town's next policy of choice is for relocation of threatened structures.

Policy 8.1.11 Development Within Areas That Might Be Susceptible To Sea Level Rise

The Town will encourage appropriate agencies of the State and Federal government to monitor research on sea level rise and its theoretical effect on coastal areas. The Town will consider any State and Federal policies formulated prior to amending its policies regarding sea level rise; specifically, development within areas up to 5 feet above sea level which may be susceptible to sea level rise, and the need to renourish the beach or relocate structures as necessary.

8.1.12 Upland Excavation for Marina Basins

As the immediate coastal area of New Hanover County, indeed the State of North Carolina, has become more intensively developed for shoreline uses, natural sites for deep water marinas have become increasingly scarce. State regulations which discourage or prohibit the destruction of wetland habitats, primary nursery areas and other important, environmentally sensitive estuarine areas have made opportunities for new marina developments difficult at best. As a result, marina facilities carved out of upland areas have occasionally been viewed as a viable option. In the case of Wrightsville Beach, however, the value of "upland" real estate is so prohibitive that excavating such land for a marina basin is economically unfeasible. In addition, previously mentioned concerns about parking demands and traffic generation associated with any form of marina development cause the Town to discourage such developments.

Policy 8.1.12 Upland Excavation For Marina Basins

The Town will discourage the expansion of existing marinas and the development of additional marinas, including upland marinas in excavated basins.

8.1.13 Marsh Damage From Bulkhead Installation

The Town of Wrightsville Beach supports State standards for bulkheads and rip rap as identified in the State's general permit for the construction of such structures in estuarine and public trust waters. To meet the requirements of the general permit, proposed bulkheads and/or rip rap can be placed only along shore lines either (1) void of wetland vegetation—including marsh grass and wooded swamp—or, (2) where all construction is to be accomplished landward of such vegetation.

Policy 8.1.13 Marsh Damage From Bulkhead Installation

The Town urges proper maintenance of existing bulkheads and seawalls for health, safety and aesthetic reasons. The Town shall not allow marshes or beach areas to be damaged by the installation of new bulkheads, groins or seawalls.

8.1.14 Water Quality Problems and Management Measures Designed to Address Them

The majority of the Resource Protection Policies stated above, including but not limited to policies concerning Areas of Environmental Concern, marina development, and stormwater runoff, are designed to curtail or halt the further degradation of water quality of sound and beach waters at Wrightsville Beach. The Town continually seeks to develop new management practices and measures to implement improvements in water quality.

Policy 8.1.14 Water Quality Problems and Management Measures Designed to Address Them

The Town shall continue to seek improved marina management, stormwater runoff and other development standards which will protect and enhance the water quality of the estuarine system.

8.2 Resource Production And Management Policies

8.2.0 Resource Production and Management

Due to the fully developed, urban nature of Town of Wrightsville Beach, resource production and management of the land resource, in the traditional sense of those words, is not applicable at Wrightsville Beach. Real estate values are so high as to preclude the use of available land for productive agricultural, commercial forest lands, and mineral production areas. Nonetheless the estuarine system within which the town is located is one of the most "productive" ecosystems on earth. For this reason the Town has committed itself to participating in no activity nor approving of any activity which would seriously damage the long-term productive capability of the estuarine system.

Policy 8.2.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Resource Production and Management

Wrightsville Beach is located in the midst of one of the most biologically productive ecosystems on earth—estuarine waters and marshes. The Town shall undertake no activity nor approve of any activity which would seriously harm the long term viability and productivity of this ecosystem.

Policy 8.2.1 Productive Agricultural Lands

Not applicable

Policy 8.2.2 Commercial Forest Lands

Not applicable

Policy 8.2.3 Mineral Production Areas—Existing and Potential

Mineral production and extraction activities of any kind shall not be permitted within the planning jurisdiction of Wrightsville Beach. This shall not preclude removal of sand deposits for beach nourishment.

8.2.4 Fisheries Resources

Commercial and recreational fishing are an integral part of the economic, social and cultural heritage of the Town of Wrightsville Beach. While commercial fishing has generally declined as the community has become more urbanized, it nonetheless continues to play a significant role in shaping the overall coastal environment of the community.

For that matter, commercial fish landings are not the sole indicators of the impact of the fisheries resource on the overall economy of Wrightsville Beach. Much of the town's tourism-driven economy is derived from both the real and perceived image of an area with close ties to the sea. During the public meetings held for the land use plan, this concern was most apparent in the amount of support given to the protection of wild life habitats and the proper management of the area's natural resources, including the fisheries resource. State law precludes local governments from regulating the marine fisheries resource. The Marine Fisheries Commission and Division of Marine Fisheries however, welcome the input of local governments and residents in decisions regarding marine fisheries regulations. Also, the Town does have the ability and responsibility to control landside development to minimize adverse impacts on water quality in the estuary and, particularly, in the nursery areas and shellfish areas associated with coastal wetlands.

Policy 8.2.4 Fisheries Resources (Commercial and Recreational)

(1) The Town supports projects which increase productivity of coastal and estuarine waters. Projects such as oyster reseeding programs and properly constructed artificial reef construction will be supported in the future.

(2) The Town supports the "Big Sweep" beach cleanup program and all other similar efforts to enhance the cleanliness of the natural environment.

(3) The Town supports the NC Division of Marine Fisheries and the Division of Coastal Management in their development of regulations and policies, including those on trawling and gill netting in ocean and estuarine waters, activities in primary nursery areas (PNA's), and activities in outstanding resource waters (ORW's).

8.2.5 Off Road Vehicles

Concern for the environmental impacts of off road vehicles in coastal North Carolina has traditionally been oriented toward beach and near-beach dune areas. Due to the intensive use of the beach strand and the need to protect any remaining dune areas, the Town of Wrightsville Beach prohibits the use of off road vehicles anywhere outside public rights of way or in private drives.

Policy 8.2.5 Off Road Vehicles

Off-road vehicles (with the exception of emergency vehicles) are not allowed outside public rights of way and private drives at Wrightsville Beach.

8.2.6 Development Impacts

All of the town's major development impact issues, such as the intensification of residential development, management of stormwater runoff and marina expansions, are covered under specific policy headings in various parts of this plan. The table of contents provides a means of quickly identifying location of policies concerning particular development issues. Nonetheless, this approach to addressing development impacts points up the need to consider the "cumulative impacts" of a whole host of development activities occurring simultaneously at Wrightsville Beach. It is ultimately the combined effect of all development and redevelopment activities that together define the impact on the area's natural resources, particularly water quality. The Town, therefore, recognizes the need to address each new development or redevelopment activity on a case-by-case basis to minimize the cumulative effect of incremental impacts.

Policy 8.2.6 Development Impacts

New development and redevelopment activities shall not be permitted which would act to degrade the quality of natural and scenic resources at Wrightsville Beach.

8.3 Economic And Community Development Policies

8.3.0 Economic and Community Growth and Development

This policy section is concerned with those issues associated with the development and redevelopment of the Town of Wrightsville Beach. Among the several issues discussed are the types of development to be encouraged, the density of development, provision of public facilities to serve development, the urban growth pattern desired, local support for State and Federal programs influencing development, and the provision of access to public open space and land and water recreational areas.

The Town's overall policy statement in this subject area calls for the incremental refinement and enhancement of the town, as opposed to wholesale destruction and replacement of older structures by larger, more intensive developments. This overall policy position also calls for the preservation and retention of existing neighborhoods at Wrightsville Beach, rather than their destruction and replacement with more intensive multi family developments, or even the type of massive single family home that is surfacing at various locations at Wrightsville Beach.

A commitment to this policy implies follow through on a range of other policies and actions. For example, the Town will take steps to discourage large incremental amounts of growth and development and large increases in population that might be associated with larger or more intensive multi family developments. Also, rather than allowing for more intensive development and its associated increases in stormwater runoff, parking demand, and traffic congestion, the Town will act in support of a continued emphasis on single family and duplex residences and appropriate neighborhood-oriented and local businesses. At the same time, the Town will also work to preserve and enhance parks and natural areas within and around the community.

Implementation actions in furtherance of this policy will require a reexamination of the Town's zoning ordinance and building standards to encourage building forms in keeping with the existing character of development at the beach. Current building heights, in particular, should be reviewed as to their appropriateness in neighborhoods where the predominant building height is clearly less than 40 feet.

Policy 8.3.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Economic & Community Growth & Development

Wrightsville Beach shall measure "progress" in terms of a continual refinement and enhancement of existing development forms and services. This shall be viewed in contrast with the undesirable wholesale displacement of existing development by larger, more intensive developments.

Policy 8.3.0 A Growth of Town's Jurisdiction

Expansion of the Town's ETJ and/or corporate limits on the mainland/Wrightsville Sound area shall not be supported.

Policy 8.3.0 B Population Increases

The Town shall discourage large incremental amounts of growth and development and large increases in population.

Policy 8.3.0 C Types of Development to be Encouraged

The Town will encourage single family and duplex residences, appropriate neighborhood-oriented and local businesses, and parks and natural areas.

Policy 8.3.0 D Density of Development

The Town will consider reducing the maximum density limits of its zoning ordinance for future development and redevelopment. The Town will also consider maximum size limitations for multifamily and commercial structures.

Policy 8.3.0 E Building Standards, Generally

The Town shall support refinements in building standards throughout the community to reflect the unique characteristics of different areas of Wrightsville Beach, including but not limited to: height, setbacks, lot coverage, and floor area ratios.

Policy 8.3.0 F Building Height

The Town will not increase the Town' s present building height limitation of, "not to exceed 40 feet" in all residential (and all but one commercial) district(s). This maximum height may be reduced in neighborhoods where the prevailing building height of existing structures is less than 40 feet. Maximum building height shall be measured from the average ground plane of the lot, rather than from the nearest fire hydrant.

8.3.1 Industries Desired and Local Assets Desirable to Such Industries

Section 8.1.9 above discussed several of the reasons why the Town of Wrightsville Beach has traditionally not received nor pursued significant levels of industrial development. Chief among those reasons were for example, a lack of suitable extensive areas of land at reasonable prices and the general incompatibility of industrial development with the desired vision for the future of Wrightsville Beach by most town residents. In addition, the Town's position as a "bedroom community" for the greater Wilmington urbanizing area allows industries to be located elsewhere in the southeastern North Carolina on lands more suited for such use.

Policy 8.3.1 Industries Desired and Local Assets Desirable to Such Industries

"Industry" in the traditional manufacturing/ processing/ production sense will not be allowed at Wrightsville Beach.

8.3.2. Provision of Services to Development Generally

The Town's philosophy of providing services to development has two principal components. First, the Town is committed to providing the best quality services possible while holding the tax rate to a reasonable level. This means for example, that the Town's water system, garbage collection, law enforcement and parks and recreation should be among the best available in southeastern North Carolina for a community the size of Wrightsville Beach. Second, additions or expansions to the Town's public facilities or services made necessary by new or expanding development should be paid for by that new or expanding development. The Town feels that existing residents and property owners should not be burdened with the expense of subsidizing new development.

Policy 8.3.2 Provision of Services to Development, Generally

The Town will make all municipal facilities available to existing and future development/redevelopment, provided that such development is compatible with the growth and development objectives embodied in this land use plan. Connection to water and sewer lines will be at the expense of the developer. If water or sewer facility upgrades or expansions would be required for new development, the needed improvements would be at the expense of the developer.

Policy 8.3.2 A Potable Water Supply

The Town requires all new development to tie into its system for potable water supply and prohibits individual wells for potable use. The Town shall continue to take measures to ensure that the water supply system is adequate to meet the needs of Town residents and businesses.

Policy 8.3.2 B Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

All new developments are required to connect to the Town's central sewer system, which is connected, in turn, to the New Hanover County centralized sewer system. Package sewage treatment plants and septic systems are not allowed.

Regarding **solid waste disposal** in particular, the Town has been quite successful in establishing a recycling program that has earned the support of Town residents as well as the admiration of visitors to the beach. While finding markets for the recycled material continues to be challenge for most recycling programs, the Town is committed to an ongoing recycling effort.

Policy 8.3.2 C Solid Waste Disposal

The Town supports measures to recycle and reduce the amount of solid waste generated by all permanent residents and businesses, as well as visitors to the Beach.

8.3.3 Urban Growth Pattern Desired

The urban growth pattern at Wrightsville Beach is strongly influenced by its historic relationship to the town's abundance of beach and sound shoreline. This has created strong incentives for a relatively high intensity of use throughout the community, but particularly along the community's waterfront margins.

In recent years, the demand for additional residential development has outstripped the demand for other land uses at the beach. For example, the economic returns or "land rents" associated with the commercial development at Wrightsville Beach have been outstripped by the economic returns associated with residential development. To retain its small town character with a reasonable complement of services close at hand, the Town recognizes that it must act to reinforce the community's existing development pattern, including the protection of both existing commercial and residential areas. More will be said about the specifics of such a policy in Section 8.3.13, dealing with the traditional downtown area of Wrightsville Beach, and in the Land Classification section of this plan.

Policy 8.3.3 Urban Growth Pattern Desired

The Town shall support a small town growth pattern which reinforces the community's existing residential and commercial areas and protects the existing residential-commercial balance of the community.

8.3.4 Types of Residential Development Desired

In keeping with the general vision statement for the community, including preservation of the small town character and quality of the natural and built environment, the Town has elected to take a firm stance in opposition to the development of additional multi family complexes and high rise structures at Wrightsville Beach. At the same time, the Town also wishes to address perhaps the single greatest development issue facing the town today—the mass and bulk of new single family residential structures.

These massive single family structures involve dramatic increases in square footage, bedrooms, baths, etc. over first or second generation beach cottages. Despite the favorable connotation typically

associated with the "single family" structures, the development impacts associated with these structures can be similar in nature to the impacts associated with multi family development. These impacts can include: the number of people the structure can (or should) accommodate, the amount of additional automobile parking required, the amount of water consumed, the amount of sewage generated, the volume of trash produced, the amount of stormwater runoff diverted into the sound, and the additional fire risk and suppression capabilities needed.

The following policy reflects the position that the Town will review all proposed "developments" objectively on their merit and on their impact on the community, regardless of their building "label". (i.e. single family home). Implementing this policy may involve revisions to the Town's development regulations to explicitly address the mass, bulk and size of new residential structures. Modifications to building regulations may involve refinements in building standards for new residential structures as they relate to (1) surrounding structures and neighborhood context (2) building size and proportional lot size and (3) impacts of such structures on Town services, infrastructure and the environment.

Policy 8.3.4 Types of Residential Development Desired

The Town will not allow additional multi-family complexes and high-rise structures. Multi-unit complexes shall be limited to sites where they are presently located. New or expanded single family and duplex homes that are out of scale with other structures in their vicinity shall be discouraged.

8.3.5 Types of Commercial Development Desired

Many Town residents have had a long-standing concern about the potential introduction of franchise-type commercial businesses along with their "anywhere USA" architectural building facades and signage. While the architectural design and character of commercial development is at the core of the issue, there are also traffic generation and parking related issues.

Wrightsville Beach has severe traffic congestion during a growing part of the year. Therefore, businesses locating at Wrightsville Beach should serve primarily the *basic* service needs of Wrightsville Beach area residents and visitors. Such businesses help reduce travel demand by Wrightsville Beach residents and visitors who must otherwise travel the length of the island and over the drawbridge to obtain services on the mainland. Businesses serving an area-wide clientele should be located in appropriate commercial areas on the mainland so as not to add unnecessarily to the traffic burden at Wrightsville Beach.

As noted previously, the existing commercial base of Wrightsville Beach is being threatened by redevelopment into residential uses. One development concept that gained support during the public involvement process for the land use plan was a mixed use form of development allowing for ground floor retail uses with second floor residential uses above. In this manner, the community-serving ground floor retail uses are allowed to continue while upper story residential uses assist in increasing the ground rent generated by the real estate. This form of development may be especially appropriate for the traditional downtown area of Wrightsville Beach. This development form may also be suitable for the current marina area near the drawbridge. The application of this development form in the marina area is more fully described in the Land Classification section of this plan.

At the same time, there are some justifiable questions about mixed use developments as they might occur at Wrightsville Beach. For example, what type of parking standards would be appropriate for apartments or condominiums over retail businesses in the traditional downtown area? What types of ground floor commercial uses might qualify as "community serving"? These are the questions that the Town must seek to answer before any such development could be approved. (See Implementation Action 8.3.5 under Section 12 of this plan)

Policy 8.3.5 Types of Commercial Development Desired

(1) The Town will encourage commercial establishments providing basic goods and services to year round residents and visitors. Examples include appropriately scaled and designed grocery stores, drug stores, sit down restaurants, etc.

(2) Architectural character and signage which is not in keeping with a small town atmosphere shall be strongly discouraged.

(3) To preserve the economic viability of the community's commercial/retail/service base, the Town shall consider mixed use ground floor commercial with upper floor residential on commercially zoned properties.

(4) It is the Town's policy to help preserve the basic service function provided by community businesses at Wrightsville Beach. The Town will carefully review proposals for the conversion of such existing commercial sites to any residential uses, including additional multi-family complexes, motels or high rise structures. Location of such multi-family complexes, motels, and high rise structures shall be encouraged on sites where they are presently located.

8.3.6 Redevelopment Including Relocation of Threatened Structures

Wrightsville Beach residents who attended the public meetings for the land use plan were in agreement that, beach renourishment aside, the next policy priority of the Town ought to be the relocation of structures that are endangered or damaged by wave action and shore line erosion. This policy raises important issues regarding the current situation regarding the Shell Island Resort at the north end of Wrightsville Beach. In the Shell Island situation, the size and mass of the building preclude the possibility of relocating the structure away from it's endangered location. Thus, while this relocation policy may not be applicable to the Shell Island Resort, it does support the Town's policy position that no additional multi family complexes and high rise structures should be built anywhere at Wrightsville Beach. By keeping the relative size and scale of new construction to a reasonable size, options are left open regarding the possibility of relocating structures to safer locations, should the need arise.

Policy 8.3.6 Redevelopment, Including Relocation of Threatened Structures

Relocation of structures endangered or damaged by wave action and/or shoreline erosion is encouraged. Redevelopment of damaged or destroyed structures will be permitted by the Town according to Town ordinances, provided all current building standards and CAMA requirements are met.

8.3.7 Commitment to State and Federal Programs

CAMA Guidelines suggest that local governments address the level of local commitment to State and Federal programs including items such as erosion control, public access, highway improvements, dredging and other related government activities.

The Town of Wrightsville Beach acknowledges and supports applicable State and Federal programs which work to improve the quality of life of town residents and protect the quality of the natural environment. The Town attempts to cooperate and assist in the implementation of these programs whenever possible. Federal and State assistance programs of most importance to Wrightsville Beach include the State's beach access program, State and Federal channel maintenance and inlet projects, beach renourishment, and bridge and road improvement programs.

It is worth noting that for each Federal or State program mentioned above, both local area residents as well as residents from outside the community are benefited. This is consistent with what the Town believes State and Federal programs should do.

Policy 8.3.7 Commitment to State and Federal Programs

The Town supports the State Coastal Area Management Act, the State's beach access program, State and Federal channel maintenance and inlet projects, beach renourishment, and bridge and road improvement programs.

Policy 8.3.8 A Assistance to Channel Maintenance, Including Interstate Waterways

The Town supports State and Federal channel and inlet maintenance projects. All dredging and stabilization operations must be performed so as to minimize any damage to fish and wildlife habitat. When dredge material is suitable, the Town encourages such material to be used to nourish area beaches.

Regarding **beach renourishment** in particular, the Town continues to have concerns regarding the use of a disproportionately large percentage of room tax revenues to support tourism promotion and marketing efforts. With the advent of Interstate 40 into the Wilmington area, the need to aggressively promote Southeastern North Carolina relative to the attractiveness of other areas of North and South Carolina has diminished. At the same time, the need to employ these revenues for beach renourishment has reached critical levels. The Town, therefore, supports the return of the local room tax revenues in accordance with its original formula — a minimum of 80% for beach renourishment, and a maximum of 20% for tourism promotion.

Policy 8.3.8 B Assistance to Beach Nourishment

The Town supports the application and designation of the local room tax in accordance with its original intent— a minimum of 80% to provide a trust fund for beach renourishment projects, and a maximum of 20% to support tourism promotion and marketing efforts.

With regard to the Town's **beach hardening** policy, town residents support a position consistent with that of renourishing the beach and relocating structures as necessary—rather than hardening the shore line. In the case of the Shell Resort Island situation, Town officials viewed their support for protective measures at the north end of Wrightsville Beach as a temporary means of protecting the resort and the Town's public access way until a more permanent solution to the inlet migration can be found.

Policy 8.3.8 C Beach Hardening

The Town adheres to current CAMA policies and regulations concerning beach erosion control. Structures, including but not limited to bulkheads, rip rap, groins, or other similar features which act to harden the shoreline along the beach, shall not be permitted. Beach renourishment, retreat, or other "non-hardening" measures shall be encouraged.

Policy 8.3.8.D Soundside Bulkheads

The Town will encourage the appropriate construction and maintenance of estuarine bulkheads as necessary within the context of the CAMA regulations.

8.3.9 Energy Facility Siting and Development

As defined in the CAMA Guidelines, "major energy facilities are those energy facilities that, because of there size, magnitude and scope of impacts, have the potential to significantly effect the coastal zone. For the purposes of this definition, major energy facilities include but are not necessarily limited to (1) all oil refining facilities, (2) natural gas terminals and associated facilities, (3) oil and gas storage facilities storing more than 15 million gallons on a single site, (4) electric generating facilities of 300 MGW or larger, (5) thermal energy generation, (6) pipe lines greater than 12 inches in diameter that carry crude petroleum, natural gas, or LNG-LPG or synthetic gas."

In the past several years, proposals have been brought forward by energy companies to explore the outer continental shelf of the coast of North Carolina for natural gas and/or oil. These proposals would typically be located approximately 25 miles or more off the coast with exploration occurring in deep water. Offshore activity normally generates land-based support facilities and operations. Public input on this subject has demonstrated consistent strong local opposition to both off shore drilling and land-based activities—not only in Wrightsville Beach but anywhere along the coast of North Carolina.

Policy 8.3.9 Energy Facility Siting and Development

The Town is opposed to offshore continental shelf drilling for oil and gas. The location of shoreside OCS facilities at or adjacent to Wrightsville Beach would be inappropriate, is inconsistent with current zoning regulations, and would not be allowed within the Town's corporate limits.

8.3.10 Tourism

While tourism and visitation to Wrightsville Beach from outside the community has general support from the residents and property owners of Wrightsville Beach, such support is not without some reservations. A natural dichotomy exists between those residents who choose to make Wrightsville Beach their year round home and those who own rental properties and have businesses catering to the tourism trade. The conclusion coming out of this discussion is one that basically says "We the residents and property owners of Wrightsville Beach will provide a quality tourism experience in hopes that this will draw a "quality" tourist." The Town feels that it can best achieve this objective by providing for adequate law enforcement, business activities that cater to families, convenient, quality services, a well maintained, attractive beach strand and clean waters capable of supporting swimming and fishing.

Policy 8.3.10 Tourism

The Town of Wrightsville Beach shall welcome visitors to the area with a quality tourist experience within a year round beach community. Factors related to this policy include public safety, an atmosphere conducive to families, convenient services, a quality beach strand, and fishable, swimmable waters.

8.3.11 Public Beach and Waterfront Access

Compared to many coastal beachfront communities, the Town of Wrightsville Beach provides a sizable number of public access points to both the beach and sound areas of the community. These access points are most evident in the older, central part of the community on the Outer Island where street ends provide access to the beach on the east and to the sound on the west.

Concerns about beach access tend to focus primarily on the north and sound ends of the Outer Island. To the north, for example, there are several private streets which do not allow for public access to the beach—nor do they allow parking on the streets. Public access on Shell Island is focused entirely within designated parking lots provided for that purpose.

The south end of the island, on the other hand, presents a different situation. In this case, while there are several beach access points along the south strand, a lack of parking associated with these beach access points effectively precludes their use.

Regarding the sound side access points in the older, central part of the Outer Island, there has been discussion regarding the need to specifically identify the west end of all streets as official public access points to the sound. The intent of this action is to head off actions on the part of some property owners who would seek to block off these public access ways by constructing fences or other barriers within the right of way.

There has also been a fair amount of debate regarding the permitting of individual over-the-dune structures for individual property owners. While the Town recognizes that over-the-dune structures are advantageous in minimizing wear and tear and ultimate destruction of the frontal dune system, there is also a recognition that the construction of too many of these individual dune crossovers would eventually destroy the aesthetics of the beach strand and frontal dune. Therefore, the Town will continue to address requests for over-the-dune crossovers on a case-by-case basis.

The Wrightsville Beach Wildlife ramp for boat access to the sound has also been a subject of considerable debate within the town. State reports have indicated that this ramp is the most heavily used ramp in all of Southeastern North Carolina. It is also generally known that the great majority of boaters using the ramp are not residents of the town. Parking at the ramp is very congested on weekends and competition for use of the three existing ramps is oftentimes at a premium. Plans have been formulated to increase the

capacity of the number of boat ramps at the facility. Even so, given the current and anticipated demand for boating access over the coming years, Town officials wish to go on record as requesting that New Hanover County and other appropriate public agencies take action to provide for boating access from sites on the mainland. This is designed to relieve pressure on the Wrightsville Beach boat ramp and the associated traffic congestion and parking.

Finally, Town residents have expressed their support for a Town policy of discouraging the development of soundside waterfront property for exclusive residential use that effectively walls off the waterfront from the public. Recently, the Town turned down a request for a multi-family residential waterfront development that would do exactly that. (More on this subject is presented in the land classification section of the plan, specifically the Marina Area discussion.)

Policy 8.3.11 A Beach and Waterfront Access

(1) Public pedestrian access is limited to designated dune crossover access areas. The Town, through its CAMA minor permit program, may also allow the construction of individual over-the-dune structures for access to the beach at private access points. The intent of this policy is to encourage the construction and use of appropriately designed and located overdune structures to prevent destruction of the berm.

(2) The Town shall continue to maintain and improve its existing public beach access facilities.

(3) The Town will seek County and State funding assistance for waterfront and beach access projects and facilities.

(4) To relieve congestion at the Wrightsville Beach boat ramp, the Town shall encourage City and County efforts to provide for boat ramp facilities on the mainland side of the intracoastal waterway.

(5) The Town shall encourage the conversion of public street ends into pedestrian friendly access points.

Policy 8.3.11 B Soundside Waterfront Access

The Town shall seek to protect the remaining lineal shoreline of public and commercial properties providing for direct and indirect public access to the soundside and intracoastal waters of Wrightsville Beach. Further exclusive residential development, which would further wall off the balance of the Town's residents and visitors from the water, shall be discouraged.

8.3.12 Parks and Recreation

In addition to the beach strand and permanent open space associated with the estuarine marshes in the sound area of the community, the Town of Wrightsville Beach is fortunate to have a significant amount of park and open space land located on Harbor Island near the Town government complex. The Town received the municipal complex and park area from the U.S. Department of Interior by legislative act in the early 1980's.

In addition, the linearity of much of the town's land area affords a very high percentage of all properties in the community with direct or very convenient access to the ocean or sound. The Town has also shown a consistent commitment to providing public access to the ocean beach through numerous public accessways. These multiple accessways are supported by off-street parking lots as well as widespread use of on-street parking spaces, particularly in the older, central part of town.

Because of these existing opportunities for recreation and the near built-out condition of the town, there is not significant pressure to create additional park and open space areas. However, increasing demands and pressures on the active use of the Town's existing facilities call for continued attention to improvements and enhancements to the existing facilities.

Policy 8.3.12 Parks and Recreation

The Town supports the development, maintenance and enhancement of its parks and recreational facilities for the benefit of Town residents.

8.3.13 Downtown area

Compared to commercial areas in many other communities, the downtown commercial district of Wrightsville Beach is in pretty good shape, economically. Nonetheless, most residents and property owners in the community would offer the opinion that the downtown commercial area could stand to be upgraded from a physical standpoint. Effectuating these physical improvements may require a public-private partnership, wherein the Town provides technical assistance and the property owners improve their buildings.

From the Town's standpoint, improvements such as new sidewalks, street lights, landscaping, etc., can be used as appropriate leverage to get the private sector to act. Such improvements might be offered in exchange for the property owners in the area agreeing to commit to the development of appropriate design guidelines and building standards for building rehabilitation. Several specific implementation actions are listed in the action agenda of this plan in furtherance of this policy. Whatever improvements are made, town residents affirmed the perspective that the downtown area should retain a traditional pedestrian-oriented, village type atmosphere—as opposed to a more modern suburban/automobile shopping center type atmosphere.

Policy 8.3.13 Downtown Area

The Town supports the continuation of a commercial downtown area, to encourage a "village type" atmosphere with appropriate local community businesses.

8.3.14 Community Appearance

The overall community vision for Wrightsville Beach calls for the retention for the "small town character and quality of the natural and man made environment". In contrast to many non-resort towns, the community appearance of Wrightsville Beach is critical to the perceived quality of the town. Several components of community appearance are addressed in the policies under this heading. One distinguishing feature of this land use plan update is its emphasis on the identification and **preservation of neighborhoods** within the community. The purpose of this effort is to preserve those aspects of each neighborhood that make it unique within the Town of Wrightsville Beach. At the same time, those aspects of neighborhoods which are not desirable can be eliminated.

Policy 8.3.14 A Neighborhood Character and Preservation

The Town encourages the improvement, preservation and enhancement of the Town's areas of unique character and neighborhoods.

One of the outstanding features of Wrightsville Beach is the degree to which properties within the community have exposure to either the ocean or sound waters. It is these scenic vistas and views that give value to the real estate and make Wrightsville Beach such a pleasant place to visit. In recent years, however, there have been proposals brought forward to develop sections of the waterfront in a manner which would effectively wall off the water from the public right of way. Recently, the Town turned down a development application for multi family residential development that would have done essentially that. The Town's policy therefore is to discourage development from acting to block off scenic vistas and views.

Policy 8.3.14 B Scenic Vistas and Views

In recognition and appreciation of the scenic vistas and views of coastal waters, the Town *shall discourage development forms (i.e. "wall to wall" or lengthy, continuous* buildings and privacy walls) along estuarine and ocean shorelines which would block views to the water. The west side of Waynick Boulevard shall receive particular protection; i.e. the Town shall not permit structures in this area, other than customary docks, piers, and associated small, see through, "gazebos".

As noted previously under Section 8.1.4F, there is a natural debate between those citizens of the community who wish to preserve the more modest beach cottages of previous eras and those who wish to maximize development on the extremely valuable real estate on Wrightsville Beach. At the present time, requiring owners of property to preserve the **historic character** of the structures on their lots is not deemed feasible. At the same time, however, the Town does wish to encourage owners of older homes to keep them in good condition. In the meantime, the Town will work to develop standards to keep new development from becoming grossly out of scale with existing structures.

Policy 8.3.14 C Historic Preservation

The Town shall encourage the regular maintenance and preservation of older historic structures where desired.

Regarding **overhead utilities**, there is strong support for placing overhead poles and wires underground. While the costs of putting utilities underground on a wholesale basis may be prohibitive, the Town will continually look for opportunities to place utilities underground as redevelopment may occur in different neighborhoods within the community. In addition, there may also be opportunities to put utilities underground following a major storm event.

Policy 8.3.14 D Undergrounding of Utilities

As opportunities and budgeting constraints allow, the Town will work with neighborhoods to put utilities underground.

8.3.15 Transportation Traffic and Parking

Based on public input received, most residents and visitors would agree that traffic congestion and parking are two of the greatest constraining factors for future of growth and development or redevelopment within the Town of Wrightsville Beach. While road and street capacities are not strained on an average annual basis, traffic volumes and parking demand must be practically measured according to peak loads during the high summer season.

Policy 8.3.15 A Transportation Planning, Generally

The Town shall undertake a traffic management program which seeks to achieve a balance between pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement and safety.

The Town recognizes that the long term viability of the community's transportation system will be dependent upon a balanced mix of automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation. Regarding **public transportation**, the Town feels that this is best handled by the private sector. The Town remains open to proposals from private companies wishing to provide shared ride services to, from, and within the town.

Policy 8.3.15 B Public Transportation

The Town will consider proposals from private entities for establishing public transportation from Wrightsville Beach to the adjacent mainland areas.

The notion of a **high rise bridge** replacing the Heide Trask draw bridge has been debated for many years. Generally, a high rise bridge is not favored by most community residents for at least two basic reasons. First, the construction of a high rise bridge would dramatically change the gateway appearance of the community for travelers coming over the Intracoastal Waterway. Such a bridge would dominate the sky line and radically change the whole image of this part of New Hanover County.

Second preliminary designs have shown that a much larger area of land would be required on both sides of the Intracoastal Waterway to accommodate the slope of a taller bridge as it returns to grade. The consumption of extremely valuable real estate for the accommodation of massive bridge ramps seems imprudent at best.

A third argument, though less clear, holds that Wrightsville Beach is essentially already completely developed, and therefore, has limited ability to generate significant amounts of additional traffic. With few areas of raw land available for significant new development, this argument goes, future increases in traffic generation should be minimal. However, there are several factors working against this argument. First,

automobile ownership levels per capita have been increasing dramatically for decades. Also, despite the lack of vacant, undeveloped land, current trends at the beach are toward a dramatic intensification of residential development density. As a result, it could be argued that there will indeed be substantial increases in traffic volumes as the beach continues to redevelop over the coming years. For example, a new, seven-bedroom single family "mini castle" housing people from three different families with three or more cars will generate more traffic volumes than an older, single family beach cottage with one or two cars. Multiply this example by hundreds of residential lots at Wrightsville Beach and the increases in traffic volume become apparent. All that said, it remains to be seen whether such traffic increases would ever be sufficient to turn public opinion in favor of a high rise bridge.

Policy 8.3.15 C High Rise Bridge

The Town does not support the construction of a high rise and/or second bridge to the island.

Regarding **pedestrian and bicycle traffic**, Wrightsville Beach is a natural fit for these alternatives to the automobile. The success of the loop around the center of Harbor Island is the most obvious example of local area support for such walking, running and biking by Wrightsville Beach area residents and visitors. Also, the compact development forms of the older parts of Wrightsville Beach lend themselves very well to pedestrian and bicycle movement. While there have been calls for the establishment of designated bike lanes on many streets on the island, it would appear that a more practical solution to the bike lane issue would be to allow for the mixing of the bicycle and automobile traffic on, for example, Lumina Avenue where slow speeds are in order anyway.

Policy 8.3.15 D Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic

The Town supports the use of bicycles as a functional means of reducing automobile traffic and parking demand at the beach.

The most troublesome intersection within the Town of Wrightsville Beach is the US 74/76 **Keel Street intersection** with Causeway Drive at the eastern foot of the draw bridge. At this single intersection, traffic from both major roads from the Outer Island converge at a single point. Traffic congestion at this location is compounded by volumes of automobile traffic emerging from the commercial/marina area just south of the draw bridge and from the public boat ramp north of the draw bridge. Improvements to the traffic circulation system in this part of the island are strongly supported by Town officials working with the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Future development of properties north and south of this intersection, whether for changes in development at the marina area, or for planned increases in the size of the public boat ramp should be given consideration.

Policy 8.3.15 E Keel Street Intersection

Ongoing efforts to correct operational deficiencies at the Keel Street intersection shall be supported.

The popularity of the Town of Wrightsville Beach as a destination has increased dramatically with the advent of I-40 connecting southeastern North Carolina with the Piedmont area of North Carolina. "Locals" have been known to measure demand for **parking** by noting the hour at which day visitors to Wrightsville Beach can no longer easily find a convenient, non-metered parking space. Over the past four or five years that benchmark hour has fallen from late morning to much earlier in the day.

Much of the older part of Wrightsville Beach was developed in an era when off-street parking was not part of the standard development model. As a result, both overnight guests and day visitors find themselves competing for the same on-street parking spaces. Nonetheless, studies have shown that on-street parking is one of the most efficient forms of parking in terms of the amount of land area consumed relative to the number of parking spaces provided. (This is because the travel lanes for the street also serve as maneuvering lanes for the parking spaces). On-street parking has also been shown to have a "calming" influence on the speed of traffic on the street.

Policy 8.3.15 F Parking

(1) The Town recognizes that on street parking is one of the most efficient forms of parking available at Wrightsville Beach. The Town shall avoid actions which would further eliminate on-street parking, unless necessary for public safety purposes.

(2) Large off street parking areas or structures are viewed as an exceptionally inefficient use of limited land resources. Where such uses are created, however, they shall be in keeping with the small town character, scale and design of Wrightsville Beach.

8.3.16 The Wrightsville Sound Area

The Wrightsville Sound area of mainland New Hanover County is of fundamental concern to the Town of Wrightsville Beach. This is understandable, given the fact that the area leading to the drawbridge is the sole point of access to the Town. Also, the Town has annexed certain properties within the Sound area for reasons related primarily to water supply and tax revenues. Given these interests, the Town wishes to pursue the development of a joint plan, in cooperation with the County (or the City of Wilmington, if annexed), for the short and long range development of the Sound Area. Over the long run, it is hoped that a uniform approach to planning and development regulation in the Wrightsville Sound area will bring a more consistent quality of development to the area. Consistent standards for signage, landscaping, building setbacks, parking, and drainage, etc. could do much to prevent this area from degenerating into intense strip development.

Policy 8.3.16 The Wrightsville Sound Area

The Town shall seek to establish and maintain an on-going joint planning effort with New Hanover County (or the City of Wilmington, upon annexation) for the Wrightsville Sound Area emphasizing input from the Town on issues of land use, community appearance, open space and traffic management for areas outside the Town's corporate limits.

8.4 Continuing Public Participation Policies

The public participation plan and program for the Wrightsville Beach land use plan is discussed fully in section 11 of this document. For the sake of completeness, however, a summary of the importance of public participation in the Wrightsville Beach land use plan is included here.

Since its inception, North Carolina's Coastal Area Management Act land use planning program has placed a high level of emphasis on public participation in the development of local use plans and policies. The intent is to insure that the resulting plan and policies reflect, as closely as possible, the will of the people in the community. Two key elements must be included in any effective public participation program: (1) public education, and (2) public involvement. The most effective format for public participation involves two way communication between citizens and local planning officials.

The public participation strategy employed in the development of the Wrightsville Beach land use plan involved a variety of activities. Included were key town meetings held at the beginning, midpoint and conclusion of the planning process. Numerous meetings with the Town Planning Board, all advertised and open to the public, focused the Board's attention on the plan and its policies. It should also be noted that the Planning Board was pleased at the level of newspaper coverage given to the development of the plan including, particularly, fairly in depth articles appearing in the Wright Times.

Regarding neighborhood planning in particular, the intent of this plan is to encourage planning to be as responsive as possible to the specific wishes of the residents of various neighborhood within the Town. At the same time, neighborhood planning has been found to be effective in gaining the participation of more citizens in the future of their community. As a consequence, the Town achieves greater participation and resident commitment to the proper governance of the community, and the citizens gain a greater say in decisions affecting their everyday lives.

The following policies are designed to affirm the Town's position on public participation during plan development, as well as following plan adoption.

Policy 8.4.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Public Participation

Wrightsville Beach believes that on-going, effective public involvement, combined with factual analysis of any public issue, is the key to creating and maintaining a direction for the community upon which all may agree.

Policy 8.4.1 Land Use Plan Update Process

Public involvement will be encouraged among all permanent residents, business owners, and property owners during each Land Use Plan Update.

Policy 8.4.2 On-going Public Participation

Public involvement in planning matters will continue beyond the plan update process through providing public education and information, utilization of the news media and mailers, and public opportunities for discussion and comment on land use issues. The Planning Board will advertise the public meetings held to discuss land use and associated matters.

Policy 8.4.3 Neighborhood Planning

The Town shall encourage a high level of involvement by citizens and property owners in planning decisions through neighborhood planning. With neighborhood support, the Town shall institute an on-going neighborhood planning program, within which different parts of the Town will be addressed on a rotating basis.

8.5 Storm Hazard Mitigation, Post-Disaster Recovery And Evacuation Plans

8.5.0 Description of Storm Hazard Risk

8.5.0 A. Storm Effects

During coastal storms, including both hurricanes and northeasters, Wrightsville Beach is subject to beach erosion, storm surge, wave action, flooding, high winds, and beach washover. Of these, storm surge and high winds are typically the two most damaging storm effects at Wrightsville Beach. These storm effects may be listed at the following levels during hurricane events of increasing magnitude(as measured on the Saffir-Simpson scale):

Hurricane Category	Storm Surge	Maximum Sustained Winds
Category 1	4-5' above normal	74-95 mph
Category 2	6-8' above normal	96-110 mph
Category 3	9-12' above normal	111-130 mph
Category 4	13-18' above normal	131-155 mph
Category 5	over 18' above normal	over 155 mph

8.5.0 B. Hazard Areas Mapped

All properties within the Town of Wrightsville Beach east of the Intracoastal Waterway are located in an area susceptible to flooding during a storm event. Areas closest to the beach and near the north and south inlets, however, are at a higher level of risk, due to the effects of storm surge and wave action. These areas are shown as "V" zones on the FEMA flood insurance rate maps and are identified as the Highest Risk Area at Wrightsville Beach on the Fragile Areas Map.

8.5.0 C. Existing Development at Risk

By comparing the Fragile Areas Map with the Existing Land Use Map, a determination can be made as to the degree to which existing development is at risk at Wrightsville Beach. Based on this comparison, it is estimated that approximately 20% of all structures within the Town are at a high level of risk (storm surge and high winds), while the remaining structures (80% of the total) are at a lesser level of risk ("static flooding and high winds). In addition, structures closer to the beach usually have a higher real estate value than structures away from the beach. However, hurricane Fran demonstrated that building codes and flood regulations can significantly reduce the risk of catastrophic loss. That is, those structures that were well elevated suffered less damage than those built closer to sea level.

Another way to examine the degree to which properties are at risk is to compare the value of development within the three distinct geographic areas of the community: the Outer Island, Harbor Island, and the Mainland. The Town has complied the following figures:

	% of Total Residential Tax Value	% of Total Commercial Tax Value
Outer Island	78%	50%
Harbor Island	21%	28%
Mainland	1%	21%

Presumably, structures located on the Outer Island and Harbor Island would be more susceptible to loss in the event of a major storm than would be structures on the Mainland.

8.5.1 Storm Hazard Mitigation Policies

8.5.1 A. Storm Effect Mitigation

In the case of severe storms, conditions exist which pose a serious threat to life and property at Wrightsville Beach . Accordingly, the Town has adopted a Flood Plain ordinance which benefits storm hazard mitigation. Wrightsville Beach is an active participant in the National Flood Insurance Program and is supportive of its hazard mitigation elements. The Town exceeds the FEMA Criteria for minimum structure elevation in both the "A" and "V" zones and also allows less enclosed storage space on the first floor than is allowable under the National Flood Insurance Program.

Policy 8.5.1 A.(1) Standards For Construction In Flood Prone Areas.

The Town shall require all new and substantially improved structures to meet Federal, State and local standards for construction in flood prone areas.

Policy 8.5.1 A.(2) Flood Plain Ordinance

The Town will only grant variances to the Flood Plain ordinance on a rare occasions to individual properties that meet the findings set forth under FEMA Guidelines.

Policy 8.5.1 A.(3) Shore and Hurricane Wave Protection Project.

To help mitigate the effect of storm related hazards, the Town shall continue to work with the Federal, State and County governments on regular beach renourishment through a Shore and Hurricane Wave Protection Project.

8.5.1 B. Discouragement of Hazardous Development

The Town strictly follows the CAMA development guidelines and has used land use tools, such as zoning, to discourage development in hazardous locations.

Policy 8.5.1 B. Discouragement of Hazardous Development

The Town shall use a variety of methods, including particularly, CAMA setback requirements and zoning, to discourage the development of property that can reasonably be foreseen as potentially hazardous.

8.5.1 C. Public Land Acquisition

Due to the multiple street ends providing public access to both the beach and sound, and the sizable land area in public ownership around the Town Hall complex, there is little incentive for the Town to acquire additional properties for public use. However, the Town remains open to opportunities for selective property acquisitions on a case by case basis, including the donations of property for tax benefits.

Policy 8.5.1 C (1) Advanced Planning for Acquisition

The Town supports advanced planning for acquisition of properties that are not suitable for development, where such acquisition serves a useful public purpose. Such public purpose may include, for example, public access to the beach or sound, where such access is needed. The Town shall not make poor investments, however, in properties which are in danger of completely eroding, or where other liabilities could render them useless.

Policy 8.5.1 C (2) Proactive Approach to Land Acquisition

The Town shall investigate outside funding sources for land acquisition and shall encourage gifts and donations for tax credits, as a mitigative measure for future storm events. To provide a proactive approach, priority areas for acquisition shall be identified in advance of storm events.

Policy 8.5.1 C (3) State and Federal Public Land Acquisition

Public acquisition of appropriate properties is also encouraged at the State and Federal level.

8.5.1 D. Evacuation

The Town of Wrightsville Beach coordinates its evacuation efforts with the County, primarily related to the opening of shelters. Due to the Town's close proximity to the mainland, evacuation issues related to development density and evacuation times are of lessor significance at Wrightsville Beach. Special contingencies are in place to ensure the use of the drawbridge and the safe evacuation of the Town under a variety of emergency scenarios.

Policy 8.5.1 D. Evacuation

The Town's evacuation policies under a number of emergency situations shall be specified in the emergency operations plan of the Town. The plan shall be examined for possible revision or improvements on at least an annual basis.

8.5.2 Post Disaster Reconstruction Policies

8.5.2 A. Emergency Management Plan

The Town of Wrightsville Beach coordinates disaster related activities with New Hanover County. Coordination focuses primarily on return access, debris pick up, and County health inspections.

Policy 8.5.2 A. Emergency Management Plan

The Town shall annually update its Emergency Management and Operations Plan, in concert with County and State emergency management officials, and with input from Town residents. The plan shall encompass pre-storm and immediate post storm activities and policies of the Town, including policies on evacuation and reentry, debris pick up, and public health and safety issues.

8.5.2 B. Local Reconstruction Policies

The Town of Wrightsville Beach has adopted, by ordinance, the establishment of an Emergency Management Agency. This Emergency Management Agency is activated during disaster or potentially disastrous situations. The Town has established mutual aid agreements for assistance in the areas of clean up, damage assessment and reconstruction activities.

Policy 8.5.2.B Building Permits

The Town shall issue building permits as expeditiously as possible to property owners whose structures have received minor damage by the event. If a structure has been damaged by more than 50%, the property owner will have to rebuild or modify the structure to meet current development ordinances.

8.5.2 C. Recovery Task Force

Immediately following a storm event, the Town shall first assess the extent of the structural damage to determine a further course of action. Depending on the extent of damage caused by the event, various personnel will be involved in land use decision-making. Those who may be involved include:

1. Mayor and Board of Aldermen
2. Town Manager
3. Public Works Director
4. Chief Building Inspector
5. Fire Chief
6. Police Chief
7. Assistant to the Manager
8. Representative from CP&L
9. CAMA Officials
10. Representative from NCDOT
11. Representative from Telecommunications Industry

Policy 8.5.2 C Recovery Task Force

Depending upon the degree of damage following a major storm event, the Town shall have on call a variety of public officials to serve as a Recovery Task Force to orchestrate the Town's recovery activities . The potential membership and duties of the Task Force shall be specified in the Town's Emergency Management and Operations Plan.

8.5.2 D. Staging Schedule for Reconstruction and Repair

The staging schedule for the re-establishment of essential services and the reconstruction and repair of properties damaged during a storm event, will depend on the severity of the storm and the damage inflicted. The Town will be working to restore essential services related to the public health safety and welfare first. Properties suffering minor damage will have building permits issued as expeditiously as possible. Properties suffering major damage will be allowed to implement temporary protective measures to protect their property from further damage, or to correct a public safety problem.

Policy 8.5.2 D (1) Building Permit Triage

To deal with the large number of requests for permits after a major storm, the Town shall employ a "building permit triage" for orderly issuance of building permits. Criteria for the order of issuance shall be developed in advance, with the need for modification acknowledged based upon the specific circumstances being faced.

Policy 8.5.2 D (2) restoration of public utilities and services

The Town shall also develop a planned sequence for the restoration of public utilities and services, with allowance for adjustment to deal with circumstances at hand.

8.5.2 E. Public Infrastructure Repairs and Replacement

As a part of the Town's on-going infrastructure planning activities, the Town shall maintain assessments of current infrastructure usage and need for expansion, repair or replacement. Then, following a major storm event, damage to existing public infrastructure will be evaluated as to potential opportunities for expansion or replacement. in keeping with capital improvement planning and repair needs.

Policy 8.5.2 E. Public Infrastructure Repairs and Replacement

The Town of Wrightsville Beach will assess any damage to public infrastructure at the earliest time after the event. Damage which may affect life and safety issues will be corrected to the extent that hazards have been minimized. Long term repair or replacement will be prioritized based on resources available, impact on the integrity of the infrastructure, mitigation of future hazardous situations, and on-going capital improvement needs.

9. Land Classification

9.1 Purpose of Land Classification and Relationship to Policies

The CAMA Land Use Planning Guidelines require that local governments in the coastal area classify various parts of their planning jurisdictions in accordance with the desired density and character of development for each area of their community. By delineating land classes on a map, the Town can specify where various forms of development and redevelopment might best occur, and where natural and cultural resources should be conserved. Unlike zoning, however, which has the force of law, land classification is merely a tool to help implement policies and is not, in the strict sense of the term, a regulatory mechanism.

The State's land classification system has several suggested categories. For example, the **Developed** class is intended for areas that are already urban in nature. The **Transition** class is intended for areas that are expected to become urban within the next decade. The **Rural** class is intended for areas that are not expected to become urban within the next decade—and so forth.

In the case of Wrightsville Beach, however, the entire incorporated area, (excluding marshes, the beach strand, and public trust waters) is essentially already urban in nature. In other words, the area is already fully developed and is currently receiving the full range of urban services, including particularly, centralized water and sewer. According CAMA Guidelines, all of the developable area of Wrightsville Beach qualifies for inclusion in the **Developed** class, with the balance of the area—i.e. marshes, the beach strand and public trust waters—qualifying for the **Conservation** class.

Designating the entire land area of the Town into a single land class, however, defeats the purpose of providing policy guidance to the Town for different parts of the community. For this reason, the Town has elected to subdivide the **Developed** class into several sub-categories. These sub-categories correspond to neighborhood planning areas within the Town with distinct development characteristics or common attributes. Policy positions can then be included in each of these neighborhood sub-classifications to help the Town maintain the distinguishable neighborhood qualities unique to each area.

9.2 The Land Classification System at Wrightsville Beach

The purpose of the land classification system for the Town of Wrightsville Beach, therefore, is to identify areas of *similar character and association* for which custom-tailored development policies may be drafted and implemented. For example, the Old Harbor Island area has a development character quite different from the development character of the Shell Island area. To employ the same development policies for each of these areas would be inappropriate, eventually resulting in the total loss of the unique character of each of these areas. In other words, as development and redevelopment occurs at Wrightsville Beach, it should be designed in context of the neighborhood planning area in which it is located.

This section describes the several "neighborhood planning areas" at Wrightsville Beach. All neighborhood planning areas fall into the broad classification of **Developed** under the State guidelines for planning in the coastal area. For each neighborhood, a *Description Of Area Character* is presented, followed immediately by a statement of *Policy Emphasis* to be employed by the Town in making development decisions for that area.

9.3 The Land Classification Map

The land classification map for Wrightsville Beach is provided at the back of this document. The general location of each land class (neighborhood planning area) in the town is also provided as a part of each area description below.

9.4 Developed Areas (Neighborhood Planning Areas)

9.4.1 Central Beach Area

Description of Area Character

The Central Beach Area extends from Stone Street on the south to Mallard Street on the north. This centrally located area is one of the most "self contained" sub areas of Wrightsville Beach, having a good range of services close at hand. While the area is characterized by a predominance of traditional single family and duplex beach cottages, it also contains the traditional central business district of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, a church, Johnnie Mercer's Fishing Pier, etc. Many of the cottages in this area are quite old and, therefore, have historic interest. Lot sizes are consistently some of the smallest in the town. Most residential structures are three stories or less in height and are characterized by wide, functional porches fronting on at least the street. Building materials tend to be of wood and asbestos.

The Central Beach Area is perhaps the most pedestrian-oriented of any part of the beach, with heavy foot traffic on area sidewalks and considerable on-street bicycling. Off-street parking is limited in this area with designated on-street parking "up for grabs" by overnight visitors and day visitors alike. Public access to the shoreline is plentiful with all east-west running streets providing access to the beach strand at their eastern end. The Town also retains right of way easements at the west end of all east-west running streets (where they intersect with Banks Channel).

While single family and duplex beach cottages are the predominant land use in the area, there are also a few examples of multi-family accommodations, particularly near the area's two commercial service districts: (1) The traditional central business district area, and (2) Johnnie Mercer's Pier area. The commercial service districts for the central beach area are compact in nature and individual businesses are generally small in scale.

The water quality of sound side public trust waters in Banks Channel adjacent to the Central Beach area is classified as SB (suitable for swimming but not for shellfishing). There is a noticeable absence of tall sailboats in this section of Banks Channel because the area is framed by the two low-level bridges to the north and south.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan is on retaining the modest scale of most of the structures in the Central Beach Area, as well as its pedestrian-oriented nature. Additional large scale and/or intensive single family (mini-castles) shall be discouraged. Building heights of three stories or less (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate. Architectural designs shall be encouraged which continue to employ (1) functional porches facing at least the street and (2) wooden exterior siding. Additional multi-family residential or intensification of existing multi-family developments shall not be allowed. While new large scale or intensified commercial development shall not be permitted, existing commercial areas shall be protected for the useful services these businesses provide to the area.

9.4.2 The North End

Description of Area Character

The North End extends from Mallard Street on the south to Mason's Inlet on the north. The North End is one of the "newest" parts of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, having been developed in the 1970's and 1980's. The area is characterized by medium to large scale single family homes on relatively large lots, as well as a high number of multi-family residential units, housed in large scale, high density structures. With the exception of hotel developments (Holiday Inn and the Shell Island Resort), there are no commercial uses in this part of the town. Building materials are of wood, stucco and concrete construction. Building heights tend to be two or three stories for single family detached residential structures and four or more stories for multi-family residential units. In recent years, the area has witnessed the introduction of several four story single family homes. These taller residential structures are still clearly in the minority.

While bicyclists may be seen traveling to the north end of the island, this area is perhaps the least pedestrian-oriented of any part of Wrightsville Beach. Unlike the balance of the barrier island, public access to the beach is confined to designated, special purpose parking lots. Most side streets in this section of the town are private with no opportunities for on-street parking or public access at street ends. Off-street parking associated with each residential unit is adequate, however.

The sound side public trust waters adjacent to this portion of Wrightsville Beach have a water quality classification of SA (suitable for swimming and for shellfishing). Navigable water, however, is quite limited, with the predominance of the sound side estuarine system consumed by coastal marshes. The predominance of marshes and limited navigable waters has resulted in instances of private piers being constructed great distances into the marsh. Such lengthy piers have raised concerns about aesthetics and environmental impacts on the marsh ecosystem.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan is to allow for the continued use of each land parcel as currently built upon, with no further multi-family development, whether by new development or by increases in development intensity or scale. With the recent introduction of several four story single family residences into the area, public sentiment about additional four story structures has been negative. For this reason, this plan recommends that the Town seek to discourage or curtail the construction of single family residences of greater than two to three stories (total from ground level) in the North end area. This is consistent with building height policies for single family houses in all other areas of the community. The Town will also apply pier length controls to the North End by extending the Town's pier head line to this area.

9.4.3 The Parmele Area

Description of Area Character

The Parmele Area of Wrightsville Beach consists of a small peninsula of streets extending landward from the point of intersection of Parmele Boulevard and Lumina Avenue. This area is characterized by single family and duplex residential structures. At the far end of Parmele Boulevard, the Town maintains its public works complex. Lot sizes in this area of Wrightsville Beach are larger than those found in the central beach area, but clearly smaller than those found, on average, in the North End of Wrightsville beach. Buildings are typically two or three stories in total height. Homes built in this area tend to maximize their building envelopes from side lot line to side lot line, creating a solid wall of houses along the water's edge.

This area contains the highest percentage of permanent residents of anywhere on the outer island. There is no on-street parking permitted and, due to its configuration as a peninsula, there is no through traffic. With the closing of the Town's sewage treatment facility at the site of the current public works complex some years ago, the estuarine waters adjacent to the Parmele area are classified as SA (suitable for swimming and for shellfishing).

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan is on maintaining the Parmele area for exclusive single family and duplex residential uses. (Town public works facility not affected) A maximum building height of three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate for this area.

9.4.4 The Waynick Boulevard-South Lumina Area

Description of Area Character

The Waynick Boulevard-South Lumina Area extends along both sides of Waynick Boulevard and South Lumina Avenue from Stone Street on the north to the point where Waynick Boulevard ultimately turns at Sunset Street on the south. (The Surf Motel, at the intersection of Sunset Street and South Lumina, is included in this area). The area is characterized by a predominance of single family and duplex land uses,

but with a fair number of multi-family and hotel accommodations. Building forms tend to be a mixture of traditional beach cottages and more modern, large scale residences.

Due to its exposure to Banks Channel along the entire length of Waynick Boulevard, this area has a strong emphasis on boating. The water quality of sound side public trust waters in Banks Channel adjacent to this area is classified as SB (suitable for swimming but not for shellfishing).

Lots tend to be somewhat larger in size than in the Central Beach Area of the outer island. Most lot owners on the east side of Waynick have property ownership across the boulevard on the west side, adjacent to Banks Channel. As a result, there are a large number of docks and piers along Waynick Boulevard associated with homes located on the east side of Waynick Boulevard. Adding to the emphasis of boating in this section of the outer island, are the presence of two boating/yacht clubs.

Waynick Boulevard itself is characterized by large volumes of automobile traffic, and unmetered parallel parking spaces. While Waynick Boulevard is not pedestrian oriented, the abundance of on-street parallel parking here brings many pedestrians to the area. South Lumina, on the other hand, is a quiet street in this part of Town and is well used by pedestrians. Despite its relatively high traffic volumes, Waynick Boulevard is a popular route for bicyclists due to the continuous view from the Boulevard to the sound.

Compared to the Central Beach Area, there are, perhaps, fewer than half as many public access points (street ends) to the beach in this section of the outer island. This results in a quiet beach strand relative to the Central Beach Area. Pier head lengths along this section of the outer island are well established due to the heavy use of the Banks Channel area by recreational and commercial boaters alike.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan for the Waynick Boulevard-South Lumina Area is to encourage a continuation of the predominant single family and duplex residential development. Consistent with the modest size of most lots in this area, and with the objective of preserving views to both the ocean and sound, building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate. Existing commercial, multi-family and yacht club uses should continue to be allowed in their present form, but with no greater intensification of building mass or height. The Banks Channel side of Waynick Boulevard should continue to be used for docks and piers related to recreational boating in the soundside area. The Town shall not permit improvements along the sound side of the road which would block the open vista from Waynick Boulevard to Banks Channel.

9.4.5 The South End

Description of Area Character

The South End area extends from the turn in Waynick Boulevard at Sunset Street on the north to Masonboro Inlet on the south. The area has been developed predominantly for single-family uses. Lot sizes tend to be quite small (comparable in size to the Central Beach Area) except along the ocean front. There are also more empty lots here than in any other area of the outer island. Older homes in this area tend to be quite small, consistent with the small size of the originally platted lots.

Recently, there has been a noticeable trend toward dramatically taller (greater than three stories—total height from ground level) residential structures in this part of the outer island. This recent construction has been out of scale with the modest size of the lots in this area.

While public accessways to the beach are available at several locations in the area, there is very little parking available for day visitors. As a result, public accessways to the beach are used predominantly by residents (home owners and renters) in the immediate area. While there are public right of way easements to Banks Channel at the western end of each street in the area, limited public parking has traditionally precluded any significant use of these right of ways for access to the sound.

Water quality in the sound area adjacent to the South End varies from SA (suitable for swimming and for shellfishing) near Masonboro Inlet to SB (suitable for swimming but not for shellfishing) in Banks Channel.

This is one of the few areas on the outer island where side streets run in both an east-west and north-south grid pattern. The street system grid is not continuous, however, with interruptions from one block to the next. Right-of-ways can be quite narrow, further contributing to the prevailing intimate scale of development at this end of the Beach.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan is to allow the South End area to be used exclusively for the retention and development of traditional single family beach cottages (Coast Guard Station not affected), at a scale compatible with the original homes, modest lot sizes and street rights of way in the area. The avoidance of single family "mini-castles" packed on to small lots will also help avoid fire safety problems related to fire spreading quickly from one large structure to the next. Building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate in this area. Multi-family development shall not be permitted in this area.

9.4.6 Old Harbor Island

Description of Area Character

Old Harbor Island is that portion of Harbor Island generally east of the intersection of Island Drive and Causeway Drive. This area is characterized by a predominance of small to medium scale single family residential homes under a canopy of tree lined streets. This area has a very cohesive neighborhood feeling, with a large number of permanent residents, including many long term residents. The area's commercial uses are clustered at the west end of bridge to the outer island. The town's only public school, Wrightsville Beach Elementary School, is also located in this area at the north end of Coral Drive.

Lot sizes tend to be quite small in Old Harbor Island. Recently, the area has witnessed the replacement of several formally modest homes with significantly larger residential structures. Many homes in this part of Wrightsville Beach are of traditional ground level construction and one to two stories in total height. While it is recognized that redevelopment may eventually increase the average height and bulk of structures in the area, recent new construction has been grossly out of scale with the character of the area.

The configuration of streets and compact scale of the neighborhood lends itself well to pedestrian movement and a lack of through traffic. Sidewalks are present throughout much of the area, and speed humps work to slow automobiles.

The water quality of Mott Channel and Banks Channel is classified as SB (suitable for swimming but not for shellfishing). There are a large number of private piers and docks along the entirety of the water's edge.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan is to allow for the continued enhancement and "healthy" redevelopment of the area, while seeking to define reasonable limits for the height, size, mass and bulk of new replacement homes. Building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate for this area. If such height limits and other standards are not implemented in the near future, and current trends continue, redevelopment will eventually destroy the current attractive relationship of the scale the structures to the neighborhood's tree canopy and to other structures in the area.

9.4.7 Pelican Drive, Lees Cut, Channel Walk & Lookout Harbor

Description of Area Character

This area is that portion of Harbor Island generally north of West Salisbury Street adjoining Lees Cut, plus Lookout Harbor and the adjacent commercial area near the west end of the Salisbury Street bridge. Most of this area was developed in the 1970's and consists of a mixture of single family and duplex residential along Pelican Drive and multi-family residential elsewhere.

Pelican Drive consists of a single row of single family and duplex homes situated between West Salisbury Street on the south and Lees Cut to the north. Until very recently, all homes along Pelican Drive were two stories in total height and of a very similar scale, age and architectural character. Recently, however, two homes were increased to three stories and two others to more than three stories in total height.

Channel Walk and Lees Cut are two multi-family developments located on the north side of West Salisbury Street as it approaches the draw bridge. These two and three story units have their own recreational amenities and function independently from one another as well as from the balance of the town.

Lookout Harbor and several commercial and office uses anchor the east end of West Salisbury Street just before the bridge crosses over Banks Channel to the outer island. The multi-family units at Lookout Harbor are each greater than three stories in height.

The water quality classification of Lees Cut is SA (suitable for swimming and for shellfishing). The entire area has good proximity to the Town's recreational facilities and pedestrian "loop" around the central portion of Harbor Island. According to wildlife authorities, the public boat ramp on the north side of the draw bridge adjacent to the intracoastal waterway is the most heavily used launching facility in southeastern North Carolina.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan for this portion of Harbor Island is to allow for the continued use of each land parcel as currently built upon, with no increases in development intensity or scale. In keeping with the prevailing height and character of existing single family and duplex homes along Pelican Drive, building heights of two to no more than three stories (total, from ground level) shall be considered appropriate along this street. No further multi-family development, whether by new development or by increases in development intensity or scale at existing locations, shall be allowed. Any redevelopment of the existing commercial areas should be oriented toward community and neighborhood services.

9.4.8 Causeway Drive/Marinas Area

Description of Area Character

This area of Harbor Island extends from the intracoastal waterway on the west along the south side of Causeway Drive to its intersection with Island Drive. The area is characterized by a mixture of single and multi-family residential, marine, service, and retail land uses. Residential uses range from single family homes to modestly scaled multi-family residential units to the high rise Seapath Boataminiums. The mixture of marine service and retail land uses provides for "indirect" public access to Mott Channel and the intracoastal waterway in this area. This area generally has the largest concentration of commercial uses of anywhere on the island.

Street access to the commercial area south of the drawbridge is hampered by traffic congestion and turning movements at the Keel Street intersection. Any future redevelopment in this area will need to take this problem into consideration.

The non-residential portions of this sub-area are currently undergoing pressures for change. Recent development applications have included a proposal to replace an existing dry and wet slip marina with multi-family residential development. The application was denied by the Town.

The water quality of Mott Channel and the intracoastal waterway south of the drawbridge is classified as SB (suitable for swimming but not for shellfishing). The relatively narrow adjoining channels are some of the most intensively used coastal waters in the State of North Carolina. The number and density of boat slips, both wet and dry, is very high in this area. This, combined with a large number of marine services and water-oriented restaurants on both sides of the intracoastal waterway, makes these waters very popular for recreational boating. Weekend boating traffic is especially heavy.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan is to retain the existing land use mix for this part of Wrightsville Beach. Existing single family, duplex, and multi-family development should be allowed to continue as presently configured, with no significant intensification of development. Existing commercial land areas should be retained for the services they provide to area residents as well as for the provision of indirect access to Mott Channel and the intracoastal waterway. Future redevelopment proposals for the marina area, in particular, should include the following objectives: (1) retention of boating access to the public, whether by private or public means, (2) preservation of visual and physical access to the water's edge by the general public, and (3) preservation of community-serving commercial services. Residential uses in this area are not out of the question, provided that such uses shall not act to "wall off the water" in an exclusionary way. Given the size and configuration of the properties in this area, an overall plan for the future use of the entire commercial area south of the drawbridge would be in order. Such a plan could include, for example, ground floor retail, with a continuous public boardwalk along the water's edge, and, perhaps, residential units above. (This mixed use format with public access has worked successfully in other waterfront communities, and would be one way to satisfy the objectives outlined above.)

9.4.9 Town Government and Parks Area

Description of Area Character

The core of Harbor Island is a triangle-shaped area of land and marsh. This centrally located property accommodates most Town government functions, as well as providing for significant organized recreation and passive open space.

Policy Emphasis:

Policy emphasis for this portion of Wrightsville Beach should be on the retention of this area for the ongoing provision of local government services and parks and recreation. Recent initiatives to prepare a long-range master plan for the use of this important resource should continue to be supported.

9.4.10 The Mainland/Wrightsville Sound Area

Description of Area Character

The Mainland/Wrightsville Sound area consists of those land areas transected by the three principle roads through the area approaching the draw bridge to Wrightsville Beach: Airlie Road, Wrightsville Avenue and Eastwood Road. The Town's interests in this area are related primarily to ground water supplies, traffic management, and "gateway" appearance issues. This area also provides an important service function to Town residents, by accommodating large scale or intense commercial and retail service functions that would not be appropriate within the Town proper.

The Town's interests in groundwater supplies in the Wrightsville Sound Area include two wells and a 500,000 gallon storage tank located on Allens Lane.

In recent years, the area has become increasingly commercial as long-standing residential uses of modest scale and value have been replaced by much more intensive commercial uses and upscale residential developments. All traffic to and from Wrightsville Beach must pass through this "gateway" area. As a result, the Town has an interest in the safe and efficient traffic movement through the area and in the appearance of developments along these corridors approaching Wrightsville Beach. While planning jurisdiction over this area has been the responsibility of New Hanover County, recent annexation initiatives by the City of Wilmington will soon bring this area under the City's planning and zoning controls. Both of these local governments have shown a willingness to work together with the Town on planning issues related to the Wrightsville Sound area.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan will be on working proactively with the City of Wilmington (and/or New Hanover County) to address land development, traffic management and gateway appearance issues. The Town will also maintain an ongoing interest in maintaining and protecting its groundwater supply facilities in the area.

9.5 Conservation Areas

Purpose

The purpose of the Conservation class is to provide for the effective long-term management and protection of significant limited or irreplaceable areas. Management of these areas is needed due to the natural, cultural, recreational, scenic or natural productive values of both local and more than local concern.

Description of Area Character

Within the planning jurisdiction of the Town of Wrightsville Beach, the Conservation class includes all wetland, beach and sound areas and shoreline AEC's associated with the Atlantic Ocean, the intracoastal waterway and the various channels and marshes surrounding Wrightsville Beach. Also included in this classification are interior marshlands adjacent to the government complex on Harbor Island.

Policy Emphasis:

The policy emphasis of this plan for Conservation areas shall be to protect the natural integrity and functioning of these areas, as well as in providing open space and visual relief. Approved uses shall be in accordance with CAMA General Use Standards for AEC's, with priority given to direct and indirect public access having a minimal impact on the natural functioning of these systems. The Town shall also maintain an on-going concern for the preservation of views and vistas to these areas, by carefully controlling development along the water's edge which would serve to block or wall off the public from these valuable scenic and recreational resources.

10. Intergovernmental Coordination

10.1 Uses of the Land Use Plan

The Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan, including the policy statements and the land classification map, will serve to coordinate numerous policies, standards, regulations, and other governmental activities at the local, State and Federal levels. Such coordination is achieved in three ways:

1. *State and Federal government agencies are required to review local land use plans when* considering any actions or activities under their jurisdiction. Their actions are to be consistent, whenever possible, with the intent of the local land use plan.

2. The policies and land classification system described in the land use plan provide a basis for planning and budgeting for the provision of public facilities and services such as water and sewer systems, roads and schools.

3. The land use plan can serve as a coordinating instrument in helping to bring together the various regulatory policies and decisions of the local government into one document.

At Wrightsville Beach, all three categories of coordination were employed during development of the plan, and will continue to be employed until the next plan update is prepared in approximately five years. As such, the information contained in the plan serves as a benchmark for the condition of the Town in 1996, and a baseline from which to measure change over time.

10.2 Coordination With Other Governmental Jurisdictions

The preparation of the Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan and Policies has proceeded in a manner which recognizes the growth issues and planning activities of other local government jurisdictions, as well as State and Federal agencies. In preparing the plan, the policies and land classification designations of the Wilmington-New Hanover CAMA Land Use Plan for the nearby Wrightsville Sound area were reviewed. In addition, The Town has been actively engaged in certain joint local government issues specifically relevant to the land use plan throughout its development. These issues have included, for example, joint meetings to address the NC DOT Transportation Improvement Program, the jet ski issue, and the southward movement of Mason's Inlet, among others.

State and local representatives involved in population projections, marine fisheries, water quality monitoring, and historic, archaeological preservation and local zoning were also consulted. Federal authorities in charge of wetlands identification, channel maintenance, and flood insurance were contacted. Further, within Town government, representatives of the following local government functions were consulted and involved in plan preparation: General Management, Fire Protection, Police, Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Public Works.

11. Public Participation Plan and Process

11.1 Public Participation Plan

Introduction

Since its inception, North Carolina's Coastal Area Management Act Program has placed a high level of emphasis on public participation in the development of local land use plans and policies. The intent is to insure that the resulting plan and policies reflect, as closely as possible, the will of the people in the community.

Meaningful public involvement was an important element in preparing an updated land use plan for the Town of Wrightsville Beach. For the public involvement program to be effective, two key factors were included:

1) public education and
2) public input.

The most effective format for public involvement includes this two-way communication between citizens and local officials.

The public involvement strategy employed for the Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan provided numerous opportunities for effective communication. First and foremost was the appointment of the Town Planning Board as the Steering Committee for the Plan. This 7-member board is appointed by the Board of Aldermen and represents various interests and geographic areas of the community.

The Planning Board had an active, leadership role throughout the preparation of the Land Use Plan. The Committee's role was particularly critical during the formulation of the Land Use Policies and the Land Classification Map. In this capacity, the Planning Board offered local perspectives, providing input on the accuracy of information gathered, and feedback on the policies as they developed. All Planning Board meetings were open to the public and several, jointly hosted with the Board of Aldermen, were designed specifically to garner public input in an organized, constructive fashion.

The following is a summary of program phases and key meetings for public involvement in the preparation of the Town of Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan:

11.2 Public Involvement Process

1. Strategy Development and Public Participation Plan

The first priority in carrying out the public participation strategy for the Land Use Plan was to meet with key local officials to discuss and receive approval of the planning process for citizen involvement. During this phase, the planning consultant, the Town Staff, the Planning Board and the Board of Aldermen each had a constructive role in preparing, reviewing, and approving the proposed planning and public involvement strategy. Also, State concerns, suggestions, and requirements for the planning process were conveyed to the Town staff and officials during a special presentation made by a representative of the Division of Coastal Management at the Town Hall.

2. Issue Identification by the Public (Town-Wide Meeting No. 1)

Issue identification for the Land Use Plan consisted of a major Town meeting held at Wrightsville Beach Elementary School. A concerted effort was made to schedule the meeting date to maximize public exposure and media attention. The meeting was jointly hosted by the Planning Board and the Board of Aldermen. Special meeting announcements were prepared and efforts were made to distribute them to a wide cross section of community interests. Announcements were also sent to local news media.

The purpose of this meeting was to provide the public with the opportunity to make their concerns known about growth and development issues facing the Town. The intent was to accomplish this task as early as

possible in the planning process, so that these concerns might be recorded and used as a foundation for the preparation of the Plan.

The specific involvement technique used to solicit public input was a modified nominal group process using index cards and display sheets. Following the identification of issues, the relative priority of each issue was identified by a simple voting process. After the meeting was completed, all issues were typed up exactly as recorded and sorted into policy categories consistent, to the extent possible, with subject areas compatible with the CAMA guidelines. The complete listing and ranking of all issues as identified at the meeting was then presented to the Planning Board for discussion and review. This written tabulation of growth issues was also made available for public information and review.

3. Discussion of Public Input and Growth Factors

Based in part on the issues identified during Phases 1 and 2 above, and in keeping with the data collection and analysis requirements of the CAMA land use planning guidelines, a growth factors analysis was prepared for initial review by the Planning Board. To accomplish this task, a draft of the analysis was distributed to the Planning Board for their review and comment. Each Planning Board member was asked to review the document for both its scope and its accuracy. As a result of the review, changes were made and additional research was conducted to address specific comments and points felt to be in need of clarification.

4. Policy Development Work Sessions with Planning Board

With the results of the initial public input in hand, and with the major findings of the Growth Factors Analysis complete, the consulting planner, working closely with the Town planning staff and Planning Board, prepared a draft set of land use policies. The format for reviewing the draft policies involved several lengthy work sessions designed to give the Planning Board the opportunity to review the Town's existing policies and to compare them to the set of proposed policies. These work sessions were beneficial in identifying draft policies most in need of modification, deletion or addition.

Based on the direction received during these work sessions, the consulting planner then prepared a revised set of draft Polices for public review.

5. Public Open House on Draft Policies and Land Classification System (Town-Wide Meeting No. 2)

Once a set of draft land use policies were in place, the Planning Board hosted an open public meeting at Wrightsville Beach Elementary School to receive public input and comment on the work to date. To facilitate efficient and equitable input from the public, the draft policies were enlarged on poster sized sheets and arranged on the walls of the meeting room in a "walk-around questionnaire" format. The public was then invited to circulate around the room expressing their level of agreement or disagreement with each policy statement as well as being able to provide additional written comments on the sheets. Also, planning board members were positioned around the room at the various stations to allow for informal discussions regarding the various policies, or to clarify technical terms or issues. This meeting was well attended and quite productive.

6. Joint Meeting Between Planning Board and Board of Aldermen to Discuss Draft Policies and Public Comments Received

A joint work session on the draft policies and land classification system was held to provide the opportunity for the Planning Board and Board of Aldermen to meet in a round table discussion. The purpose of the meeting was not to formally adopt the plan, but rather to seek consensus as to the adequacy of the policies for formal public review, and generally, for submission to the CAMA program staff. While this meeting was also open to the public, (and several members of the public did attend) its primary intent was to allow the two boards to concentrate their time and attention on the draft policies, rather than on receiving additional public input at this time.

7. Completion of Draft Land Use Plan for Public Review

After the joint work session on the draft plan was completed, appropriate revisions to the policies were made in accordance with directives received from the two boards during the round table discussion. Also, explanatory narrative was prepared as background for each policy section of the plan, and incorporated into a complete draft of plan, combining all sections prepared to date. Also included in this draft was the Implementation Actions section. Unlike the Town's previous land use plans, however, this plan section was prepared as a separate element, allowing this section to be updated on an annual basis without altering the balance of the plan. A formal public meeting was then scheduled by the Board of Aldermen to accept public comment on the full plan.

8. Public Comment Meeting /Follow-up Review Session (Town-Wide Meeting No. 3)

A formal public meeting (courtesy hearing) was then scheduled by the Board of Aldermen for October 30, 1996 to accept public comment on the full plan. Notification for the meeting included an announcement printed in the newspaper of general circulation as well as regular notification through the public meetings notification process. All comments received at the meeting, whether favorable, neutral or negative, were noted for the record and for further action as appropriate.

Once public comments were accepted and recorded, the Board of Aldermen provided direction as to those changes that would be appropriate before sending the draft plan on to the State for review. Plan revisions were then completed in accordance with directives received.

9. State Review and Comment/ Prepare Revisions As Appropriate

Following additional revisions to the plan in accordance with directives received from the Planning Board and Board of Aldermen, the plan was sent to the State CAMA program staff for review and comment in early November 1996. Comments were received from the State in late- January, 1997. The consulting planner then prepared revisions to the Plan for review by the Planning Board. The Planning Board approved the changes at a meeting held on February 4, 1997. The Board of Aldermen, at their meeting on February 13, 1997, then reviewed and approved the revisions as authorized by the Planning Board. The Board of Aldermen then met on February 27, 1997 to set a date for a formal public hearing on the land use plan, as required, no less than 30 days hence. The public hearing was set for April 10, 1997.

10. Board of Aldermen Adoption of Plan (Town-Wide Meeting No. 4/Public Hearing)

The Board of Aldermen held a formal public hearing on April 10, 1997 to formally present the plan for public review and comment. Notice of the meeting was in accordance with requirements for public hearings for the local adoption of CAMA Land Use Plans, as well as the Town's normal protocol. Following the hearing, the plan was reviewed for a final time by the Town Planning Board, with revisions made and recommended to the Board of Aldermen. Adoption of the plan was then completed on May 8, 1997 by formal action and vote of the Board of Aldermen. The plan was then submitted to the Coastal Resources Commission for certification by that body.

11. Coastal Resources Commission Certification

The officially adopted Town of Carolina Beach Land Use Plan was submitted to the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission for certification by that body at their regular meeting on May 29-30, 1997.

11.3 Summary of Meetings Held During Planning Process

The following phases and meetings correspond to the phases of the public involvement process described above.

1. Strategy Development/ Public Participation Plan

1/2/96	Planning Board	Town Hall	Introduce Consultant and CRC Representative/Staff Discuss land use planning

2. Issue Identification by the Public (Town-Wide Meeting No. 1)

1/30/96	Plng Brd /Brd Aldrmn	W.B. Elem School	Town Meeting to identify issues

3. Discussion of Public Input and Growth Factors

2/13/96	Planning Board	Town Hall	Review of Citizen Input Overview of Plan
4/30/96	Planning Board	Town Hall	Review of Growth Factors Analysis Discuss Land Classification

4. Policy Development Work Sessions with Planning Board

5/28/96	Planning Board	Town Hall	Review Draft Policies Review Neighborhoods
6/9/96	Planning Board	Town Hall	Review Draft Policies
6/24/96	Planning Board	Town Hall	Review Draft Policies

5. Public Open House on Draft Policies and Land Classification System (Town-Wide Meeting No. 2)

7/29/96	Plng Brd/Brd Aldrmn	W.B. Elem School	Town Meeting to Review Policies

6. Joint Meeting Between Planning Board and Board of Aldermen to Discuss Draft Policies and Public Comments Received

8/7/96	Plng Brd/Brd Aldermen	Town Hall	Joint Meeting to Review Public Input on Policies

7. Completion of Draft Land Use Plan for Public Review

No public meetings; writing and editing completed during this time.

8. Public Comment Meeting /Follow-up Review Session (Town-Wide Meeting No. 3)

10/30/96	Board of Aldermen	Town Hall	Public Hearing to receive public input on the completed draft plan

9. Review of State Comments Received and Revisions Made

2/4/97	Planning Board	Town Hall	Review Comments and Revisions to Plan; approve changes; forward to Brd of Aldrmn
2/13/97	Board of Aldermen	Town Hall	Review Comments and Revisions to Plan Approve changes

10. Public Hearing (Town-Wide Meeting No. 4)

2/27/97	Board of Aldermen	Town Hall	Set date for formal public hearing.
4/10/97	Board of Aldermen	Town Hall	Public Hearing by the Board of Aldermen for consideration of adoption. Received comments from public and staff. Asked Planning Board to review.

11. Planning Board Final Review and Recommendation

5/6/97	Planning Board	Town Hall	Reviewed comments—made recommendations to Board of Aldermen to adopt with comments inserted.

12. Local Adoption of Plan

5/8/97	Board of Aldermen	Town Hall	Adopted the land use plan.

13. Coastal Resources Commission Certification

5/30/97	Coastal Resources Commission	Regular meeting to certify the Plan.

12. Appendices

12.1 Evaluation of Effectiveness of Previous Land Use Plan

While the previous land use plan contained much detailed information about existing conditions in the Town , its effectiveness as an instrument of local government policy was limited. Three specific shortcomings of that plan, and measures taken in this land use plan update to correct those deficiencies are outlined as follows:

Plan Deficiency:
• **The policy section of the Town's previous land use plan had few discrete policy statements.** Rather, this section consisted of a running narrative within which the reader may or may not have found statements which reflect the Town's official position on a given issue

Corrective action taken for this plan update:
For each policy area, a discrete policy statement consisting of no more than one or two sentences has been developed to clearly state the Town's position on that issue. Further, each policy statement has been assigned a unique policy reference number so that specific policies can be easily referenced in evaluating development proposals, rezoning petitions, etc. brought before the Planning Board and the Town Board of Aldermen.

Plan Deficiency:
• **The Town's previous land use plan did not specifically identify implementation actions.**
Implementation actions are a fundamental requirement of the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) guidelines for land use plans. Without implementation actions, the Town did not have the benefit of an agreed upon strategy for carrying out the Policies. Nor is there any way to assess whether the Town was effective in carrying out implementation action actions since none were listed.

Corrective action taken for this plan update:
A new section of the land use plan has been created which brings together in one place all suggested implementation actions designed to carry out the policies. Rather than scattering these actions throughout the text of the Policies, this section provides an appropriate means of clearly organizing all potential actions for convenient review and use. A further benefit of this approach is that the action section may be updated on a regular basis (e.g. annually in conjunction with the Town's budget process) without changing the policy portion of the plan. If the document is maintained in a three ring binder for frequent users of the plan, the previous year's action agenda may be simply removed and a new section inserted. This approach should make monitoring of the plan's implementation easier as well.

Plan Deficiency:
• **The format of the previous land use plan's land classification system offered little or no policy guidance.**
The Land Classification Map prepared for the last land use plan was basically a *tracing* of the Town's mapped zoning districts. Essentially, the Town's Land Classes were the result of sub-categories created within the *Developed* classification which conformed very closely to the Town's zoning districts. While this clearly reflects a high degree of consistency between the Land Classification Map and the zoning ordinance, it afforded no additional guidance to development decisions beyond that already contained in the Town's zoning ordinance.

Corrective action taken for this plan update:
For this plan, the Land Classification Map has been restructured to differentiate between the various unique neighborhoods in the Town that have similar design, function, age, and/or character. Policy positions were then formulated and included in the Land Use Plan to help the Town maintain the distinguishable neighborhood qualities unique to each of these neighborhood areas. These policy positions, in turn, provide consistent guidance to Town Officials in applying the rules of the Town's zoning ordinance to specific developments.

12.2 Sources and Locations of Additional Information

To find out more about various aspects of land use and development at Wrightsville Beach, the interested citizen is invited to visit the Town offices where a variety of studies, plans, maps, aerial photographs and booklets are maintained on file.

12.3 Action Agenda For the Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan

Introduction to the Action Agenda

The Action Agenda of the Wrightsville Beach Land Use Plan is provided to identify specific implementation actions in furtherance of the Town's development policies. (For a complete listing of the full policy statements associated with each issue, see **Section 1 Executive Summary** or **Section 8 Policies**) These actions are normally intended to be accomplished within the five year planning period between adoption of this plan and the next land use plan update (scheduled for 2001).

Implementation actions are designed to suggest possible courses of action available to the Town to carry out the Policies. In some instances, a single implementation action may be listed in support of more than one policy. In other instances, where the Town is already implementing a policy , an on-going program of implementation may be mentioned. In still others, a particular policy may not warrant or require a specific implementation action to be effective.

The suggested actions are not all-inclusive nor are they binding; additional actions may be added and others removed as conditions change. In fact, it is suggested that this summary of policies and implementation actions be reviewed on an annual basis during development of the Town's work program and budget approval process. In this manner, the effectiveness of the policies and implementation actions can be better evaluated. Further, by making this Action Agenda a separate section of the plan (as opposed to scattering the implementation actions throughout the text of the plan), these actions can be updated and re-inserted into the document on a regular basis.

Policy Area	Implementation Action(s)
OVERALL COMMUNITY VISION	
Policy 8.0 General Vision Policy for Next Ten Years	**Action 8.0** The Town staff, Planning Board, and Board of Aldermen shall employ the policies contained in this land use plan on a routine basis in evaluating building proposals and other matters concerning growth and development.
RESOURCE PROTECTION POLICIES	
Policy 8.1.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Resource Protection	See specific Implementation Actions listed below as they pertain to specific policy issues.
Policy 8.1.1 A Appropriate, Corrective Drainage Improvements	**Action 8.1.1 A** The Town shall study the issue of impervious surfaces related to new construction and redevelopment with an eye toward minimizing paved surfaces which would increase runoff onto adjacent properties or into estuarine waters.

Policy 8.1.1 B Application of Federal, State, and Local Controls

Policy 8.1.1 C Development in the 100 Year Floodplain

Action 8.1.1 C Recognizing the critical role of the National Flood insurance Program in protecting private property and lives at Wrightsville Beach, the Town shall continue to strictly enforce ordinance provisions which bring structures into compliance with the Town's flood plain protection standards.

Policy 8.1.2 Areas Of Environmental Concern

Action 8.1.2 The Town shall continue to administer the CAMA Minor Permit Program in accordance with CAMA standards for Areas of Environmental Concern.

Policy 8.1.2 A Coastal Wetlands

Policy 8.1.2 B Estuarine Waters

Policy 8.1.2 C Public Trust Areas

Action 8.1.2 C (1) The Town shall develop a *water use and harbor management plan* to address the competing interests for use of public trust waters at Wrightsville Beach.

Action 8.1.2 C (2) The Town shall continue to participate on the special local government committee appointed to address the management and proper regulation of jet skis and similar personal watercraft.

Action 8.1.2 C (3) The Town shall extend the pierhead line to the north end of Wrightsville Beach.

Policy 8.1.2 D Estuarine Shorelines

Action 8.1.8 D As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* (See Action 8.1.2 c (1)), the Town shall address the issue of marina development and expansion. Development along estuarine shorelines shall be subject to zoning and site plan approval in accordance with the intent of these policies

Policy 8.1.2 E Ocean Hazard Areas

Policy 8.1.3 Turtle Nesting Areas

Action 8.1.3 The Town shall explore the feasibility of having one or more appropriate areas of the Town designated as a turtle nesting sanctuary.

Policy 8.1.4 A Other Wetlands	
Policy 8.1.4 B Maritime Forests and Tree Cover	**Action 8.1.4 B (1)** The Town shall work with the New Hanover County Agricultural Extension Service and utility companies to reduce tree trimming damage. **Action 8.1.4 B (2)** The Town shall investigate participation in the Tree City USA program.
Policy 8.1.4 C Outstanding Resource Water Areas	
Policy 8.1.4 D Shellfishing Waters	
Policy 8.1.4 E Water Supply Areas and Other Waters with Special Values	
Policy 8.1.4 F Cultural and Historic Resources	**Action 8.1.4 F** The Town shall continue to work with the Historic Landmark Commission in its efforts to preserve historic structures at Wrightsville Beach.
Policy 8.1.5 Protection Of Potable Water Supply	
Policy 8.1.6 Package Sewage Treatment Plants	
Policy 8.1.7 Storm Water Runoff	**Action 8.1.7** The Town shall study the issue of impervious surfaces related to new construction and redevelopment with an eye toward minimizing paved surfaces which would increase runoff onto adjacent properties or into estuarine waters.
Policy 8.1.8 A Marinas, Wetslips	**Action 8.1.8 A** As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* (See Action 8.1.2 c (1)), the Town shall address the location and operation of wet slip marinas.
Policy 8.1.8 B Floating Home Development	**Action 8.1.8 B** As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* (See Action 8.1.2 c (1)), the Town shall continue current policies which prohibit floating homes from occupying limited public trust surface water areas.
Policy 8.1.8 C Moorings and Mooring Fields	**Action 8.1.8 C** As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* (See Action 8.1.2 c (1)), the Town shall address the location and design of moorings and mooring fields.

Policy 8.1.8 D Dry Stack Storage

Action 8.1.8 D As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* (See Action 8.1.2 c (1)), the Town shall address the location and operation of dry stack storage facilities.

Policy 8.1.8 E Commercial Fishing Dockage

Action 8.1.8 E As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* the Town shall address the location and operation of commercial fishing dockage.

Policy 8.1.8 F Vessels for Hire, Charter Boats and Cruise Ship Dockage

Action 8.1.8 F As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* the Town shall address the size, location and operation of vessels for hire, charter boats, and cruise ship dockage.

Policy 8.1.9 Industrial Impacts On Fragile Areas

Policy 8.1.10 Development Of Sound And Estuarine System Islands

Policy 8.1.11 Development Within Areas That Might Be Susceptible To Sea Level Rise

Policy 8.1.12 Upland Excavation For Marina Basins

Action 8.1.12 As part of its *water use and harbor management plan* (See Action 8.1.2 c (1)), the Town shall address the issue of upland excavation for marina basins. Such development shall also be subject to zoning and site plan review in keeping with the intent of these policies

Policy 8.1.13 Marsh Damage From Bulkhead Installation

Policy 8.1.14 Water Quality Problems and Management Measures

Action 8.1.14 The Town shall continue to enforce the existing stormwater retention ordinance which requires on-site retention of the first 4" of rainfall in a 24 hour period.

RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Policy 8.2.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Resource Production and Management

Action 8.2.0 The Town shall request a meeting with state water quality monitoring officials to receive an update on water quality conditions, monitoring programs,. and to identify significant water quality issues.

Policy 8.2.1 Productive Agricultural Lands

Policy 8.2.2 Commercial Forest Lands

Policy 8.2.3 Mineral Production Areas—Existing and Potential

Policy 8.2.4 Fisheries Resources (Commercial and Recreational)

Action 8.2.4 The Town shall, through proclamation and public awareness, assist in promoting the annual Big Sweep clean-up.

Policy 8.2.5 Off Road Vehicles

Policy 8.2.6 Development Impacts

Action 8.2.6 The Town shall conduct a review of its development standards to identify and prevent potential adverse impacts on natural and scenic resources at Wrightsville Beach.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Policy 8.3.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Economic & Community Growth & Development

Policy 8.3.0 A Growth of Town's Jurisdiction

Policy 8.3.0 B Population Increases

Policy 8.3.0 C Types of Development to be Encouraged

Policy 8.3.0 D Density of Development

Action 8.3.0 D The Town shall conduct an examination of its zoning ordinance to identify acceptable density and building sizes in each of the various zoning districts.

Policy 8.3.0 E Building Standards, Generally

Action 8.3.0 E As part of the Town's neighborhood planning effort, the Town shall conduct a survey and inventory of prevailing building heights, setbacks, lot coverage, and other factors for the particular neighborhood under study. The purpose of this survey shall be to establish a baseline from which to measure appropriate change in the neighborhood.

Policy 8.3.0 F Building Height

Action 8.3.0 F The Town shall undertake ordinance revisions to clarify building height measurements and standards.

Policy 8.3.1 Industries Desired and Local Assets Desirable to Such Industries

Policy 8.3.2 Provision of Services to Development, Generally

Action 8.3.2 The Town shall review and update fees associated with water and sewer extensions and hook-ups.

Policy 8.3.2 A Potable Water Supply

Action 8.3.2 A The Town shall continue to enhance the existing water supply system, and shall explore alternatives for supplementing the existing system.

Policy 8.3.2 B Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

Policy 8.3.2 C Solid Waste Disposal

Action 8.3.2 C The Town shall continue to monitor the recycling market to identify additional items for recycling.

Policy 8.3.3 Urban Growth Pattern Desired

Action 8.3.3 The Town shall not significantly alter the existing balance of commercial and residential uses through zoning actions or other policy decisions.

Policy 8.3.4 Types of Residential Development Desired

Action 8.3.4 The Town shall not approve rezonings which would allow for additional multi-family complexes, high-rise structures, and motels at Wrightsville Beach. As part of the Town's neighborhood planning, the zoning ordinance shall be examined for possible amendments to encourage appropriate, compatible building forms.

Policy 8.3.5 Types of Commercial Development Desired

Action 8.3.5 (1) The Town shall amend the zoning ordinance to establish building size, height, mass, and setback standards which support the existing development character of nearby properties.

Action 8.3.5 (2) The Town shall not issue permits for projects which would allow for additional multi-family complexes, high-rise structures, and motels at Wrightsville Beach. Such development forms shall be permitted only on sites where they are presently located.

Action 8.3.5 (3) The Town shall explore the desirability and feasibility of amend its zoning standards to allow for appropriate mixed use developments in keeping with the intent of policy 8.3.5(3)

Policy 8.3.6 Redevelopment, Including Relocation of Threatened Structures

Policy 8.3.7 Commitment to State/Federal Programs

Policy 8.3.8 A Assistance to Channel Maintenance, Including Interstate Waterways

Policy 8.3.8 B Assistance to Beach Nourishment

Action 8.3.8 B (1) The Town shall, as part of its capital improvement planning process, budget appropriate funds necessary to support on-going beach renourishment at Wrightsville Beach

Action 8.3.8 B (2) The Town shall support the reinstitution of the original 80/20 apportionment of room tax revenues with priority for beach renourishment.

Policy 8.3.8 C Beach Hardening

Policy 8.3.8.D Soundside Bulkheads

Policy 8.3.9 Energy Facility Siting and Development

Policy 8.3.10 Tourism

Action 8.3.10 The Town shall continue to work n partnership with the Wrightsville Beach Chamber of Commerce to promote quality tourism.

Policy 8.3.11 A Beach and Waterfront Access

Action 8.3.11 A The Town shall review the integrity of the existing dune system to determine the necessity of dune walkovers/crossovers in preventing ocean water washovers.

Policy 8.3.11 B Soundside Waterfront Access

Action 8.3.11 B (1) The Town shall review its development regulations to discourage development forms which would act to wall off views of the water.

Action 8.3.11 B (2) The Town shall develop and implement an action plan to identify and protect public street ends for public access to the water. Such a plan may include, for example, the placement of tasteful signage at each street end noting that the street end is a public right of way for access to the water (whether such access is "improved" or not).

Policy 8.3.12 Parks and Recreation

Policy 8.3.13 Downtown Area	**Action 8.3.13** The Town shall encourage and assist downtown property owners in the development of architectural design guidelines for the traditional downtown area of Wrightsville Beach.
Policy 8.3.14 A Neighborhood Character and Preservation	**Action 8.3.14 A** The Town will undertake a program of neighborhood based meetings on a rotating basis.
Policy 8.3.14 B Scenic Vistas and Views	**Action 8.3.14 B** The Town shall review its development regulations to discourage development forms which would act to wall off views of the water.
Policy 8.3.14 C Historic Preservation	**Action 8.3.14 C** The Town shall continue to work with the Historic Landmark Commission in its efforts to preserve historic structures at Wrightsville Beach.
Policy 8.3.14 D Undergrounding of Utilities	**Action 8.3.14 D** The Town shall budget funds to match neighborhood efforts to place overhead utilities underground.
Policy 8.3.15 A Transportation Planning, Generally	**Action 8.3.15 A** The Town shall continue to work with the NCDOT on a program to achieve a better balance between vehicular and non-vehicular movement at Wrightsville Beach.
Policy 8.3.15 B Public Transportation	
Policy 8.3.15 C High Rise Bridge	
Policy 8.3.15 D Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic	See Implementation Action 8.3.15 A above
Policy 8.3.15 E Keel Street Intersection	**Action 8.3.15 E** The Town shall continue to work with the NCDOT and the NC Wildlife Commission on improvements to traffic flow at the Keel Street intersection.
Policy 8.3.15 F Parking	
Policy 8.3.16 The Wrightsville Sound Area	**Action 8.3.16** The Town shall re-initiate a dialogue with the New Hanover County and/or the City of Wilmington regarding the future development of the Wrightsville Sound and development standards for the Wrightsville Avenue and Eastwood Road travel corridors.

CONTINUING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Policy 8.4.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Continuing Public Participation

Policy 8.4.1 Land Use Plan Update Process

Policy 8.4.2 On-going Public Participation

Policy 8.4.3 Neighborhood Planning

Action 8.4.3 The Town will undertake a program of neighborhood based meetings on a rotating basis.

STORM HAZARD MITIGATION/POST-DISASTER RECOVERY, & EVACUATION POLICIES AND PLANS

Policy 8.5.0 Basic Policy Statement Regarding Storm Hazard Mitigation/Post-Disaster Recovery, and Evacuation Policies and Plans

Action 8.5.0 The Town shall review damage caused by hurricane Bertha and Fran, as well as other storms, to determine refinements in emergency management plans and procedures.

Storm Hazard Mitigation Policies

Policy 8.5.1 A Storm Effect Mitigation

Action 8.5.1 A Recognizing the critical role of the National Flood insurance Program in protecting private property and lives at Wrightsville Beach, the Town shall continue to strictly enforce ordinance provisions which bring structures into compliance with the Town's flood plain protection standards.

Policy 8.5.1 B. Discouragement of Hazardous Development

(See Implementation Action 8.5.1 A above)

Policy 8.5.1 C. Public Land Acquisition

Policy 8.5.1 D. Evacuation

(See Implementation Action 8.5.1 A above)

Post Disaster Reconstruction Policies

Policy 8.5.2 A. Emergency Management Plan

(See Implementation Action 8.5.1 A above)

Policy 8.5.2 B. Local Reconstruction Policies

(See Implementation Action 8.5.1 A above)

Policy 8.5.2 C. Recovery Task Force

Policy 8.5.2 D. Staging Schedule for Reconstruction and Repair

Action 8.5.2 D. The Town shall establish a mutual assistance program with several other communities in North Carolina for building inspection operations.

Policy 8.5.2 E. Public Infrastructure Repairs and Replacement

Action 8.5.2 E. The Town shall inventory all damage to capital items after storms and include needed repairs and replacement in the following year's CIP.

LAND CLASSIFICATION, 1996

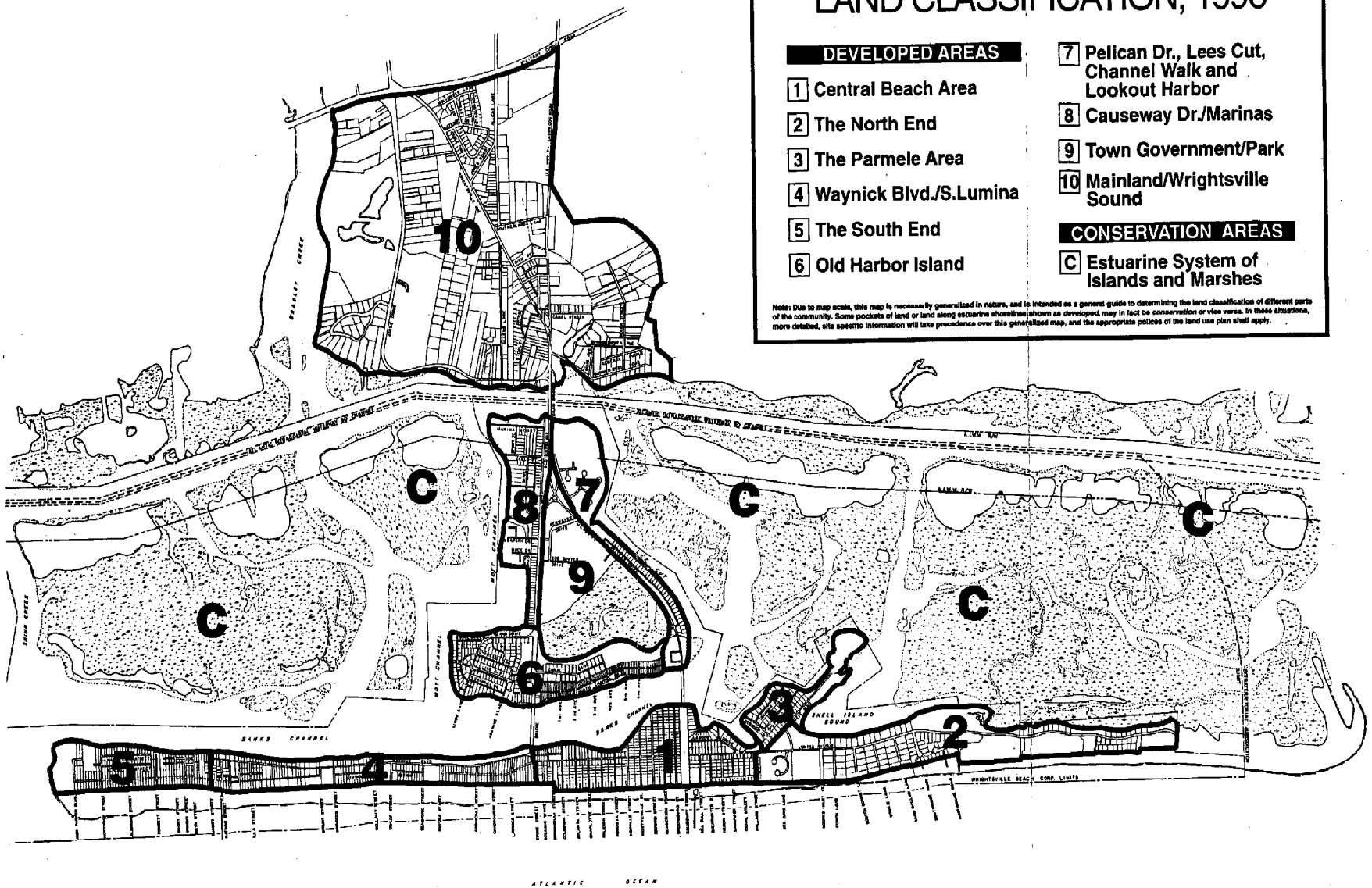
DEVELOPED AREAS

1. Central Beach Area
2. The North End
3. The Parmele Area
4. Waynick Blvd./S.Lumina
5. The South End
6. Old Harbor Island
7. Pelican Dr., Lees Cut, Channel Walk and Lookout Harbor
8. Causeway Dr./Marinas
9. Town Government/Park
10. Mainland/Wrightsville Sound

CONSERVATION AREAS

C. Estuarine System of Islands and Marshes

Note: Due to map scale, this map is necessarily generalized in nature, and is intended as a general guide to determining the land classification of different parts of the community. Some pockets of land or land along estuarine shorelines shown as *developed*, may in fact be *conservation* or vice versa. In these situations, more detailed, site specific information will take precedence over this generalized map, and the appropriate policies of the land use plan shall apply.



NORTH

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APPROXIMATE SCALE IN FEET

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1996 CAMA LAND USE PLAN

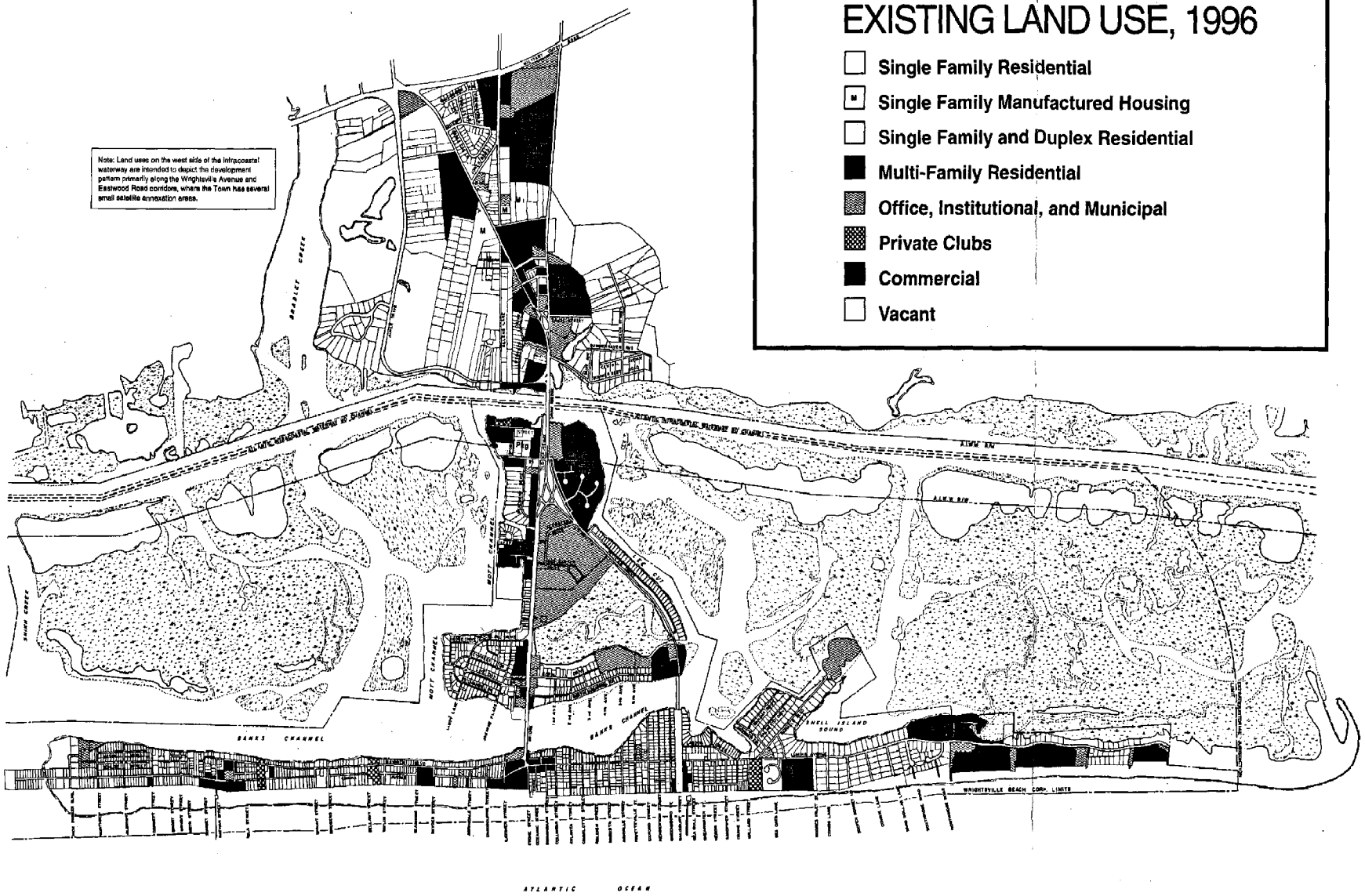
Town of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina

Technical Assistance by
Glenn Harbeck Associates

EXISTING LAND USE, 1996

- Single Family Residential
- Single Family Manufactured Housing
- Single Family and Duplex Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office, Institutional, and Municipal
- Private Clubs
- Commercial
- Vacant

Note: Land uses on the west side of the Intracoastal waterway are intended to depict the development pattern primarily along the Wrightsville Avenue and Eastwood Road corridors, where the Town has several small satellite annexation areas.



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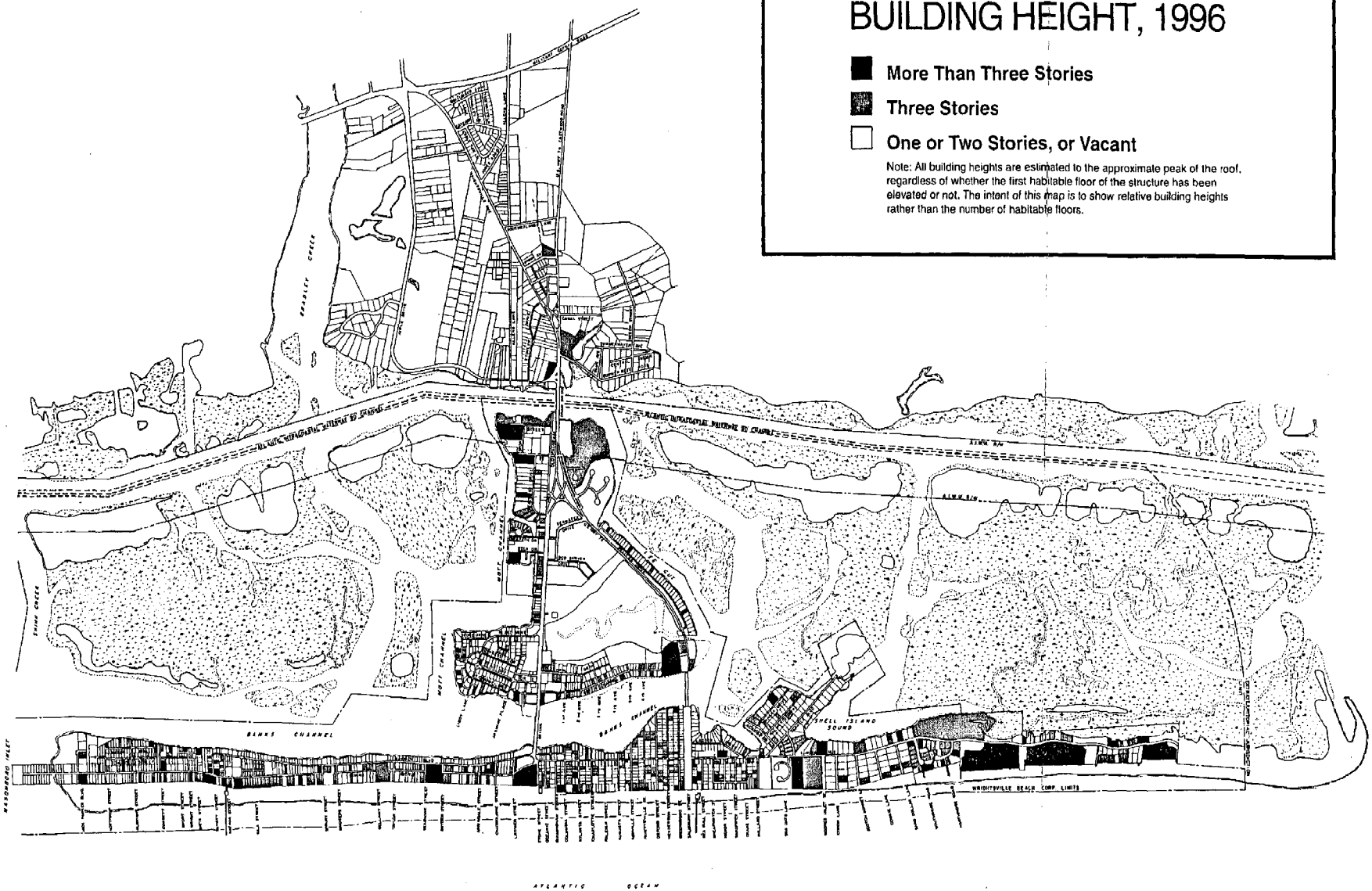
BUILDING HEIGHT, 1996

- More Than Three Stories
- Three Stories
- One or Two Stories, or Vacant

Note: All building heights are estimated to the approximate peak of the roof, regardless of whether the first habitable floor of the structure has been elevated or not. The intent of this map is to show relative building heights rather than the number of habitable floors.



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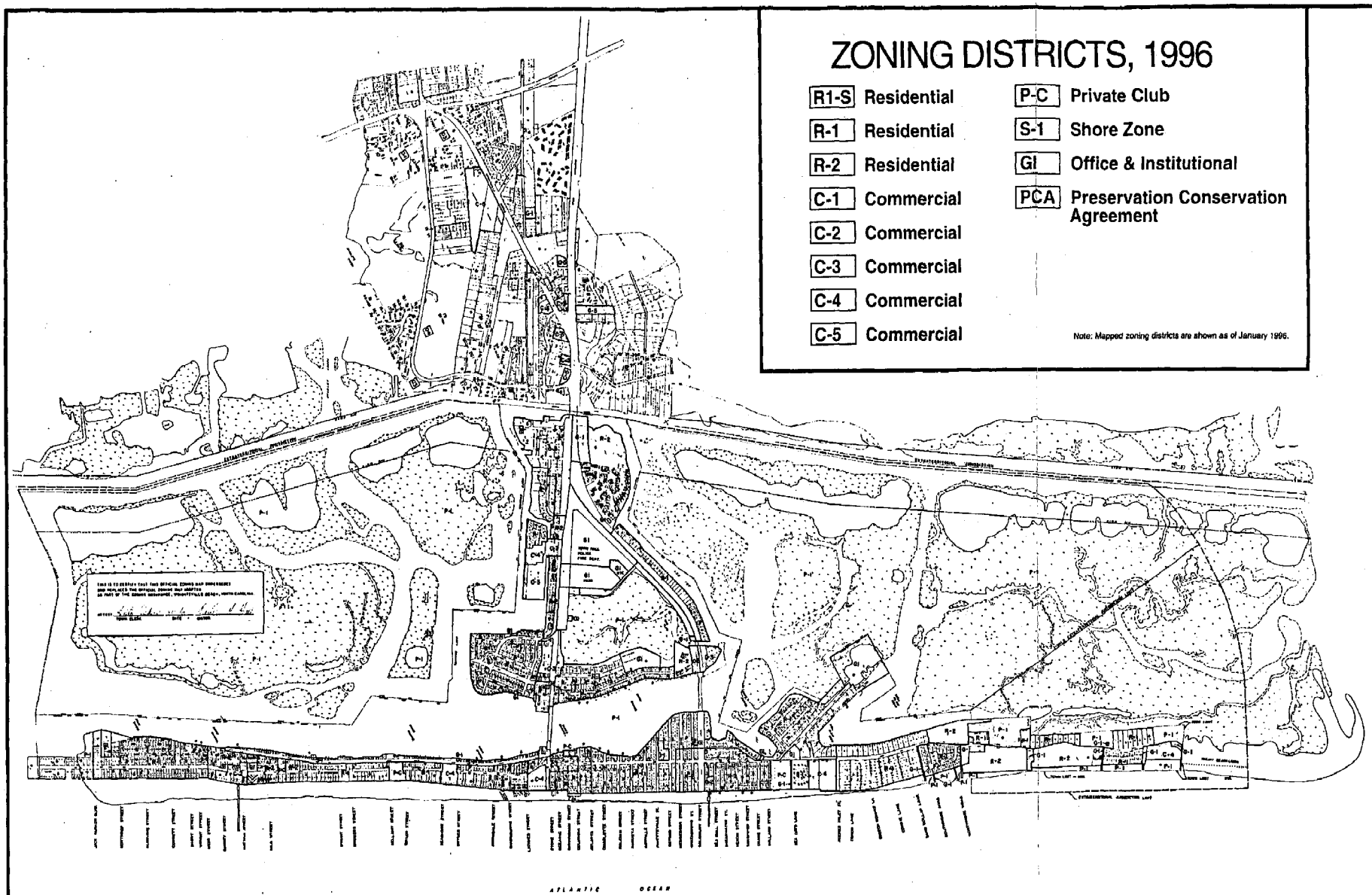

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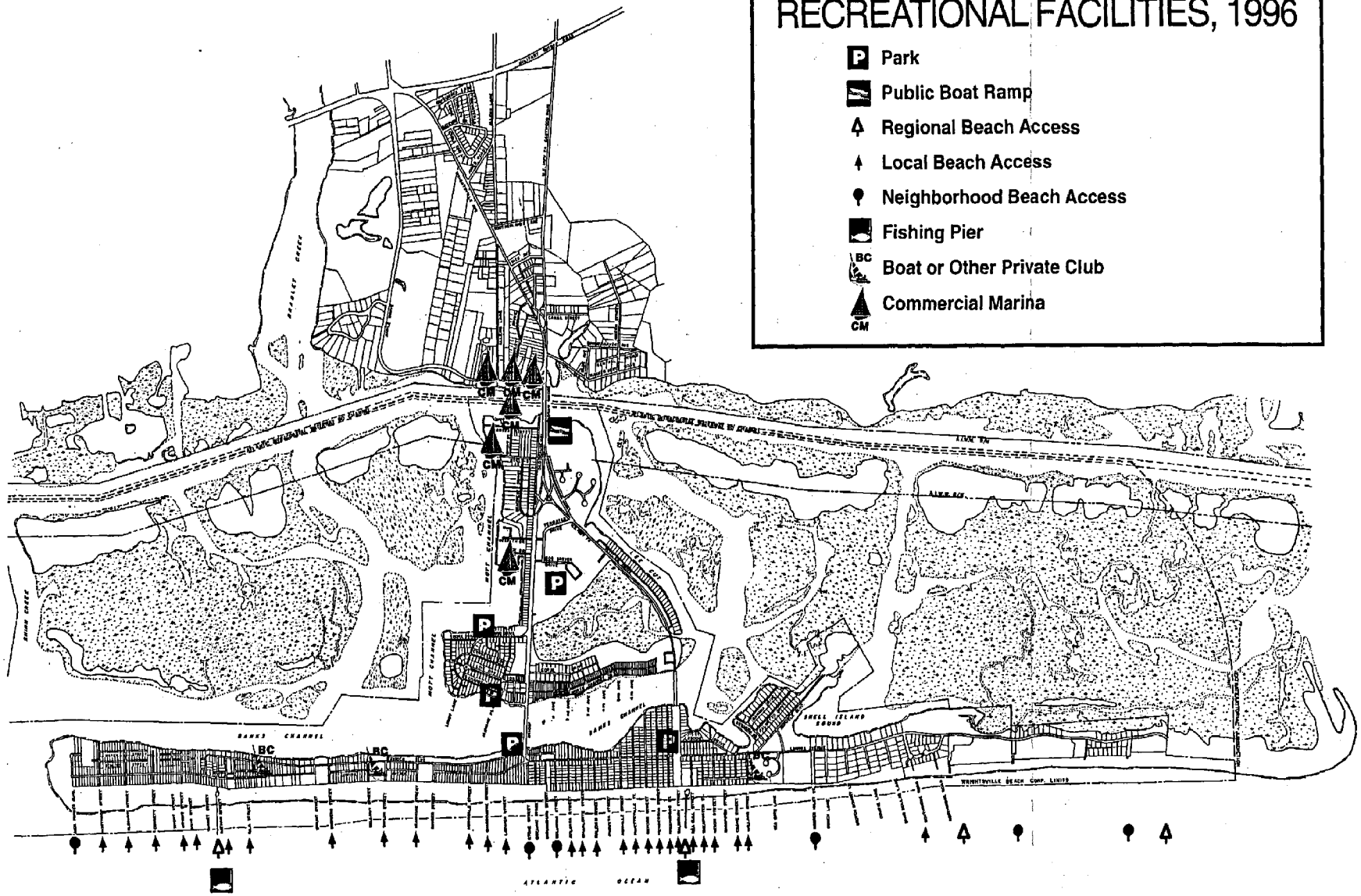
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, 1996

- P Park
- Public Boat Ramp
- Regional Beach Access
- Local Beach Access
- Neighborhood Beach Access
- Fishing Pier
- BC Boat or Other Private Club
- CM Commercial Marina



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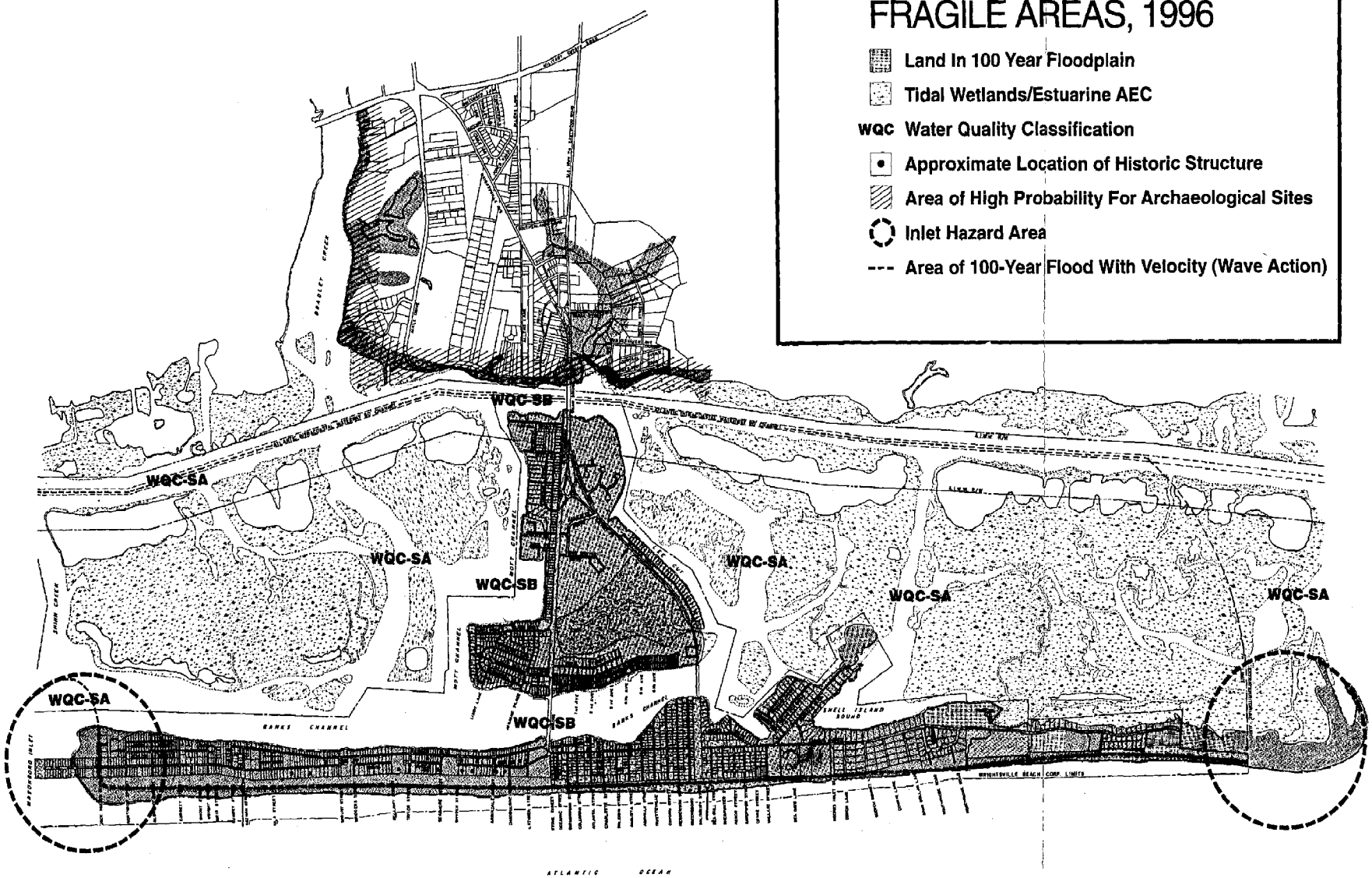
FRAGILE AREAS, 1996

- Land In 100 Year Floodplain
- Tidal Wetlands/Estuarine AEC
- WQC Water Quality Classification
- Approximate Location of Historic Structure
- Area of High Probability For Archaeological Sites
- Inlet Hazard Area
- --- Area of 100-Year Flood With Velocity (Wave Action)



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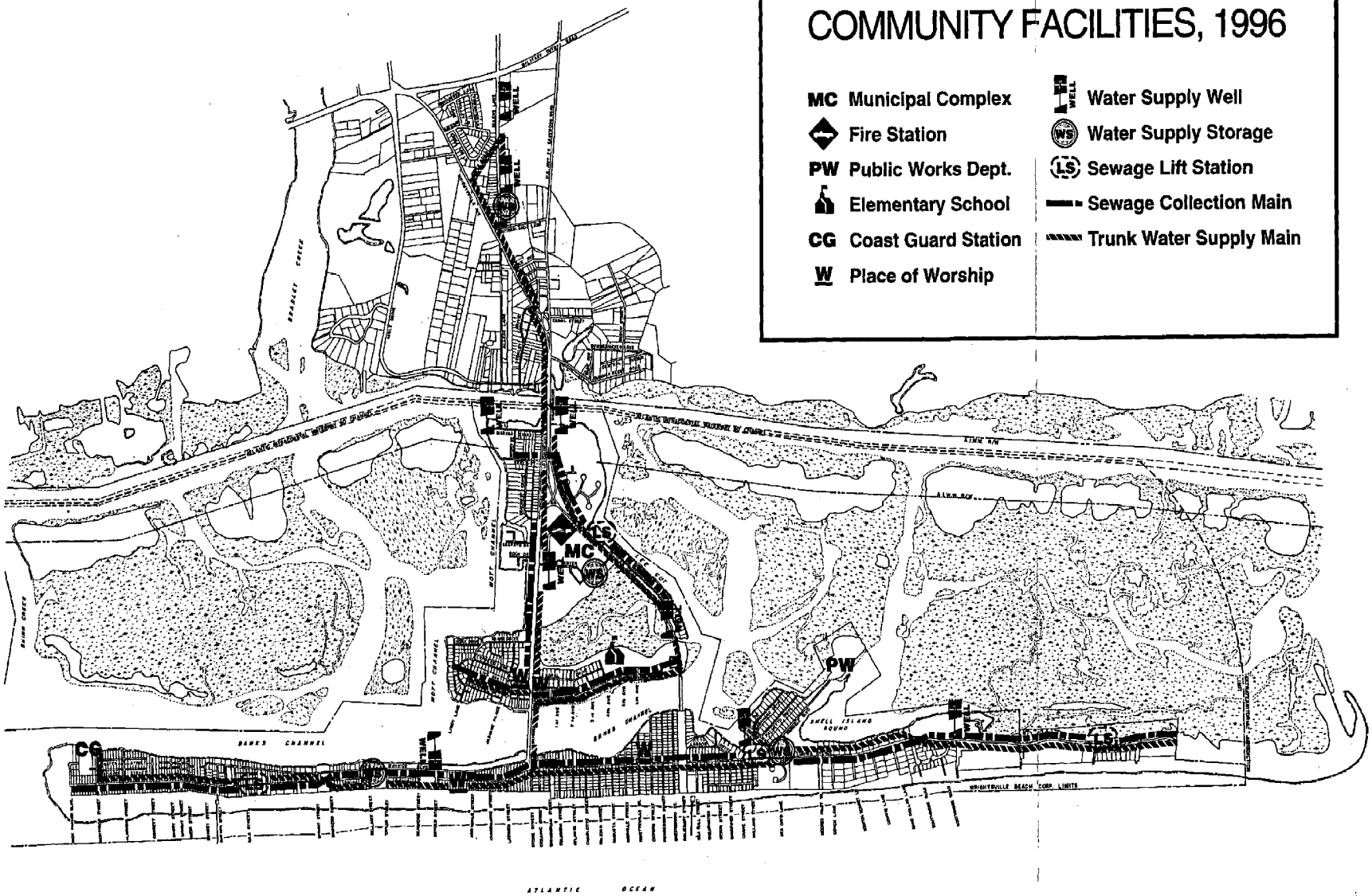
COMMUNITY FACILITIES, 1996

MC Municipal Complex	Water Supply Well
Fire Station	Water Supply Storage
PW Public Works Dept.	Sewage Lift Station
Elementary School	Sewage Collection Main
CG Coast Guard Station	Trunk Water Supply Main
W Place of Worship	



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