BELHAVEN

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TOWN OF BELHAVEN

1981

LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1981

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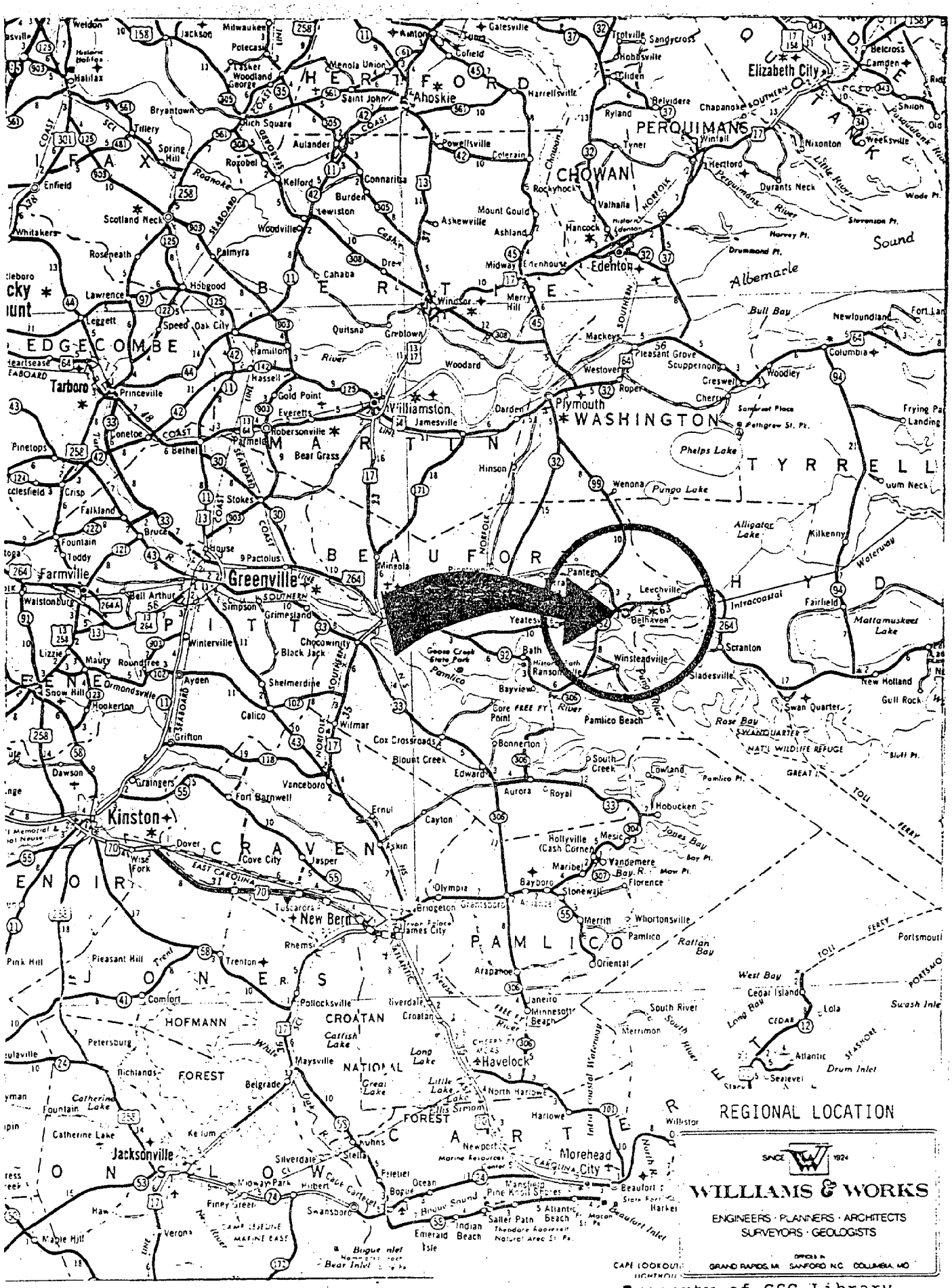
REGIONAL LOCATION
SINCE 1924
WILLIAMS & WORKS
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OFFICES IN
GRAND RAPIDS, MI. SANFORD N.C. COLUMBIA, MO
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Jacksonville
Albemarle Sound
Pamlico Sound
Pungo Lake
Phelps Lake
Alligator Lake
Mattamuskeet Lake
Pamlico Beach
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Bath
Chocowinity
Washington
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LAND USE ISSUES AND POLICIES

The most prominent feature of virtually every land use plan is the plan map itself, showing proposals for new streets, community facilities, and the land use pattern to be developed in coming years.

The land classification maps and others showing the location of Areas of Environmental Concern fulfill this function in CAMA and, typically, they receive the bulk of attention from elected officials and the general public during the plan design and review process. Those maps, however, do not by any means constitute the entire plan. They are merely graphic representations of certain goals, objectives, and policies adopted by the community as the real guides to future development.

The Coastal Resources Commission recognizes the limitations of maps as policy documents and requires that communities covered by the Act specify their development policies, in written form, for several broad topics:

- Resource protection
- Resource production and management
- Economic and community development

The Commission has attempted to distinguish a number of sub-topics within the above categories for ease and clarity both in preparation and in reading. In Belhaven, however, and doubtless in many other communities, such distinctions are difficult to make. The issues simply do not break down easily and it over-simplifies a very complex situation to attempt to do so. Accordingly, some liberties are taken here with the Commission's suggested outline, but still remaining within the general framework set out above.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 1976 CAMA Land Use Plan spells out Belhaven's development goals with respect to the following areas of community interest.

- Economic Growth and Development Goal:
  To obtain orderly and quality development of the economic sector of the Town.

- Health and Welfare Goal:
  To provide adequate health and welfare services to all in the community.

- Housing Goal:
  To preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods and insure the orderly development of new residential areas.

- Governmental Operations Goal:
  To obtain more efficient and effective governmental services according to acceptable cost-benefit considerations.

- Social, Cultural and Recreational Opportunities Goal:
  To provide, preserve, and enhance the social, cultural, and recreational facilities of the community.

- General Environmental Goal:
  To provide a physical environment that is livable, aesthetically pleasing, healthful and blight free.

The 1976 Plan then sets forth a list of objectives - specific activities - intended to connote progress toward goal achievement. These will not be recited here for the sake of brevity. It is sufficient for the purposes of this plan update to note that the Belhaven Planning Board and Town governing body reaffirm those goals and objectives for the 1980-1990 period.

A reading of the Town's goals and objectives reveals, however, that some relate to the central concerns of the Coastal Area Management Act in only a marginal way. Few of them, further, are sufficient in their present form to serve as statments of policy on the specific fields of interest required by the Coastal Resources Commission as part of this update.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: 1980-1990

Accordingly, the Town sets forth the following policy statements to guide development in the Belhaven Planning area over the coming ten years.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The Town recognizes that one of the central concerns of the Coastal Area Managment Act is, properly, the identification and protection of certain lands and waters designated as "Areas of Environmental Concern". Government intervention in the market place with respect to AEC's is necessary to assure the proper functioning of the physical and biological systems of the coastal area.

It must be observed, however, that many AEC's are attractive for development of various sorts. Further, the task of AEC definitions, both conceptually and on the ground, is as yet incomplete. This implies that the locations of AEC's and the potential uses to which they might be put are to some extent unknown. The effect of that state of affairs is to subject both Town government and private property owners to often considerable delay and confusion in determining the feasibility of development proposals.

Belhaven is in a particularly difficult situation with respect to AEC's: the largest blocks of vacant land in Town are believed to consist at least partially of AEC's. Unless these areas can be developed for typically urban uses, new development will be forced to take place outside the Town limits, producing considerable strip development and requiring the extension of public services years before they might otherwise be needed.

The Belhaven Planning Area contains three types of AEC's: coastal wetlands, estuarine erodible areas, and public trust waters.

COASTAL WETLANDS

Coastal wetlands (marshes) extend along the north bank of Pantego Creek from the western edge of the planning area (above the NC 92 bridge) to Haslin Street Extension (near Pungo District Hospital). Coastal wetlands also occur at the eastern end of Town on the two peninsulas surrounding Tooley's Creek. Portions of these areas were classified as "Transition" land on the 1976 Land Classification Map and approved as such by the Commission. This classification does not negate the existence of AEC's, however, and thus a conflict exists between the Land Classification and AEC Maps. A third expanse of coastal wetland occurs along the south bank of Pantego Creek.

The 1976 plan describes uses appropriate for coastal wetlands. These include utility easements, fishing piers, docks and agricultural uses except those involving excavation or filling which affects estuarine or other navigable waters.

The 1976 plan and the North Carolina Administrative Code also identify inappropriate uses of coastal wetlands. These include restaurants, businesses, residences, apartments, motels and hotels, trailer parks, offices, parking lots, factories, spoil and dump sites, wastewater lagoons, public and private roads.

This is a very restrictive list for AEC's with in-town locations. As noted, Belhaven's major vacant land blocks lie along Pantego Creek. Part of this area is covered by spartina cynosuroides, thus making it a coastal wetland AEC. Some parts have been used for industrial and other urban purposes in years past. Previous use of these areas renders questionable their present and future significance as natural areas. More importantly, the wetlands west of Haslin Street represent a major resource for future industrial development.

Development policy alternatives for this area include the following: (1) public acquisition for open space uses; (2) prohibition of private development through regulation; (3) regulated development within such parts of the area as

are actually within an AEC; and (4) action by the Coastal Resources Commission to remove the AEC designation from the area.

The Town does not contemplate acquisition for several reasons. First, the acquisition and maintenance costs are beyond the Town's financial capability. Second, open space use of the property would be an under-utilization of land suitable for industrial uses.

Prohibition of development through regulation would force intensive uses to be oriented solely toward the railroad and Main Street. This would result in a much smaller area available for development, perhaps precluding it altogether for some uses, such as those requiring access to the water for transportation purposes.

Regulated development under existing AEC regulations is possible depending upon the land and water requirements of the individual firm. These are not presently known, however.

Removal of the AEC designation from marshland between N.C. 92 and Haslin Street is the preferred solution. It is consistent with the 1976 Land Classification Map approved by the Coastal Resources Commission and with the suitability of the site for industrial development in terms of utilities, transportation, and zoning policy.

To summarize, Belhaven has little recourse but to seek the development and redevelopment of the waterfront for urban uses, particularly industrial uses. Prohibition of such development would result in the Town's foregoing the benefits of industrial development or forcing it to inland locations. The latter would be no solution at all if the two types of locations are not interchangeable for a given development proposal.

The precise type of industry to be sought cannot be stated at this time, but it is the Town's objective to identify firms which can make maximum use of the existing facilities: highway, water, and rail transportation.

They should also be relatively "dry" in terms of water consumption and wastewater discharges. The latter must be capable of treatment by the Town's treatment plant, with pre-treatment if necessary, provided by the firm itself.

For wetlands in the eastern part of Town, residential uses are most appropriate due to the nature of adjacent land use. These areas, too, can be served by existing public water and sewer systems.

In September 1980, a representative of the Office of Coastal Management and the Town Manager conducted an on-site inspection of both areas to define precisely the extent of AEC coverage. The result of this survey was the delineation of a relative small AEC along the Pantego Creek waterfront. It was noted that the presence of the AEC did not necessarily preclude development of the property, but that a permit would be required and that any proposed site plan may be subject to revision depending upon the findings of the permit officer.

Coastal wetlands were determined to exist on both peninsulas surrounding Tooley's Creek. Again, development is not necessarily precluded but it is subject to the issuance of permits.

In both cases, it is the position of the Town that if the property owners can obtain the required permits, development should proceed in accordance with the land classification map contained in this plan.

ESTUARINE SHORELINES

This is the second type of AEC found in the Belhaven planning area.

Although characterized as dry land, estuarine shorelines are included as AEC's because of their close association with the estuary itself. The estuarine shoreline extends landward for a distance of 75 feet from mean high tide or normal water level.

Estuarine shoreline as an AEC has been defined along the Pungo River as far west as the breakwater. This area is now occupied by scattered residences, and a marina at the head of Battalina Creek. The area has been zoned principally for residential development.

Policy alternatives for development of estuarine shorelines include: (1) prohibition of all construction through regulation; (2) public acquisition of the shoreline; or (3) limited use of the shoreline under AEC regulations. A complete prohibition of construction seems unnecessarily restrictive and perhaps not legally possible. The Town does not have the resources to research the legal implications. Too, it may unduly restrict access to the water. Acquisition is beyond the Town's financial capability, though the Town would consider acceptance of dedications from property owners if maintenance funds were available. Limited use of the shoreline is consistent with state policy on this type of AEC. It is also an inexpensive method of shoreline management and technically effective.

It is the policy of the Town of Belhaven to allow development within estuarine shorelines in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Belhaven and the use standards as set forth in 15 NCAC 7H .0209 (e), and reprinted here.

USE STANDARDS FOR ESTUARINE SHORELINES

(1) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall substantially preserve and not weaken or eliminate natural barriers to erosion, including but not limited to, peat marshland, resistant clay shorelines, cypress-gum protective fringe areas adjacent to vulnerable shorelines.

(2) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall limit the construction of impervious surfaces and areas not allowing natural drainage to only so much as is necessary to adequately service the major purpose or use for which the lot is to be developed. Impervious surfaces shall not exceed 30 percent of the AEC area of the lot, unless the applicant can show that a limitation will allow no practical use to be made of the lot.

(3) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall comply with the following mandatory standards of the North Carolina Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973:

(A) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall provide for a buffer zone along the margin of the estuarine water which is sufficient to confine visible siltation within 25 percent of the buffer zone nearest the land disturbing development.

(B) No development project proposal or design shall permit an angle for graded slopes or fill which is greater than an angle which can be retained by vegetative cover or other adequate erosion-control devices or structures.

(C) All development projects, proposals, and designs which involve uncovering more than one acre of land shall plant a ground cover sufficient to restrain erosion within 30 working days of completion of the grading; provided that this shall not apply to clearing land for the purpose of forming a reservoir later to be inundated.

(4) Development shall not have a significant adverse impact on estuarine resources.

(5) Development shall not significantly interfere with existing public rights of access to, or use of, navigable waters or public resources.

(6) No major public facility shall be permitted if such facility is likely to require extraordinary public expenditures for maintenance and continued use, unless it can be shown that the public purpose served by the facility outweighs the required public expenditures for construction, maintenance, and continued use. For the purpose of this standard, "public facility" shall mean a project which is paid for in any part by public funds.

(7) In those instances where ground absorption sewage disposal systems may legally be placed less than 100 feet from the mean or normal high water mark of any waters classified as S.A., such systems shall be permitted only if:

(A) The nitrification lines are separated from the seasonal high ground water by a minimum of 30 inches of suitable or provisionally suitable soil; and

(B) It meets all of the other applicable laws and rules for ground absorption sewage disposal systems adopted by the North Carolina division of health services and the North Carolina division of environmental management.

(8) Development shall not cause major or irreversible damage to valuable, documented historic, architectural or archaeological resources.

PUBLIC TRUST WATER

All surface water in the Belhaven Planning Area is public trust water and thus is an AEC. This includes Pantego Creek, Battalina Creek, Tooley Creek, Wynne's Gut, Shoemaker Creek, and the Pungo River.

The Zoning Ordinance does not deal adequately with the use of water-covered areas; it is aimed primarily at the use of land even though the land adjoins water. The zoning ordinance thus requires some adjustment to make this distinction. Pending such a revision, it is the policy of the Town of Belhaven to allow development only of water dependent uses within the public trust water AEC. These uses include:

- Utility Easements
- Docks
- Wharfs
- Boat Ramps
- Bridges and Bridge Approaches
- Revetments
- Bulkheads
- Culverts
- Groins
- Navigational Aids
- Mooring Pilings
- Access Channels
- Drainage Ditches

In addition to the above and consistent with the zoning ordinance it is the policy of the Town to allow the development of certain water related uses on docks and wharfs otherwise permitted. Such uses include:

- Restaurants
- Retail Sale of Seafood
- Amusement Halls
- Gift Shops
- Marine and Fuel and Oil Sales
- Boat and Motor Works
- Fishing tackle
- Boat Sales

In addition to Areas of Environmental Concern, there are several other constraints to development within the Belhaven Planning Area. The 1976 CAMA plan identifies several of these including (1) hazardous areas, (2) flood prone areas, and (3) areas with soil limitations.

HAZARD AREAS

The old air strip north of Town has been abandoned and plowed under for agricultural use. Thus, no hazard is present from this source.

Several oil and petroleum product storage areas are located within the Town. These are located close to other structures which would be threatened in the event of explosion and fire. Future zoning policy will be to discourage the expansion of hazardous uses in locations close to residential areas and the central business district. The Town will also seek to identify suitable locations for the development of new uses requiring storage of explosive and/or flammable products. An industrial park between Main Street and Pantego Creek east of N.C. 92 may be appropriate for the development and/or relocation of such uses.

FLOODING

Parts of the Belhaven Planning Area are subject to flooding. The areas involved - the entire incorporated area and much of the unincorporated area - were mapped in the 1976 Plan as "coastal flood plain" AEC's. The AEC classification has since been rescinded by the Coastal Resources Commission, but the area is still subject to flooding.

Alternatives for dealing with the flooding issue include (1) insurance to cover losses incurred - an after-the-fact technique; and (2) preventative measures - such as the construction of a dike and floodgate system.

The policy of Belhaven is to allow development within these areas if it conforms to the standards of the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) for coastal high hazard areas and safety during the flood surge from a 100 year storm.

Belhaven has qualified for flood insurance subsidies from FIA and will maintain that coverage through building code and zoning ordinance provisions designed to assure location and construction standards consistent with FIA regulations.

Construction of a dike to prevent flooding in the central business district from Wynn's Gut is technically feasible and in fact such a plan has been prepared by the Corps of Engineers. During FY 1981 the Town will review this plan and seek financial assistance from state and federal agencies to implement the plan.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Belhaven Planning area contains no buildings or sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

There are no known sites of archaeological significance in the planning area, but there has never been a thorough examination of the area for this purpose. The Town has encouraged the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources to conduct such a study as funds become available.

In 1979, the Mid East Commission conducted a windshield survey of the region, including Belhaven, to identify properties with architectural and/or historic merit. Some of those so identified may, upon further research, prove to be of sufficient value to nominate for inclusion in the National Register. The Commission's consultant found twenty properties in Belhaven with features qualifying them for inclusion in the regional inventory and further research. These are illustrated on the "Historic Buildings Inventory" map.

All twenty are located in the Main Street - Water Street corridor, the majority lying east of Pamlico Street. Most are residences and can be assumed structurally sound since they are in use. Three are churches. One industrial property, The Interstate Cooperage Company, is in ruins, likely beyond repair for any use. None are in imminent danger of destruction though two (Brooks and Credle houses) on Main Street are in the long-term path of commercial expansion from the central business district.

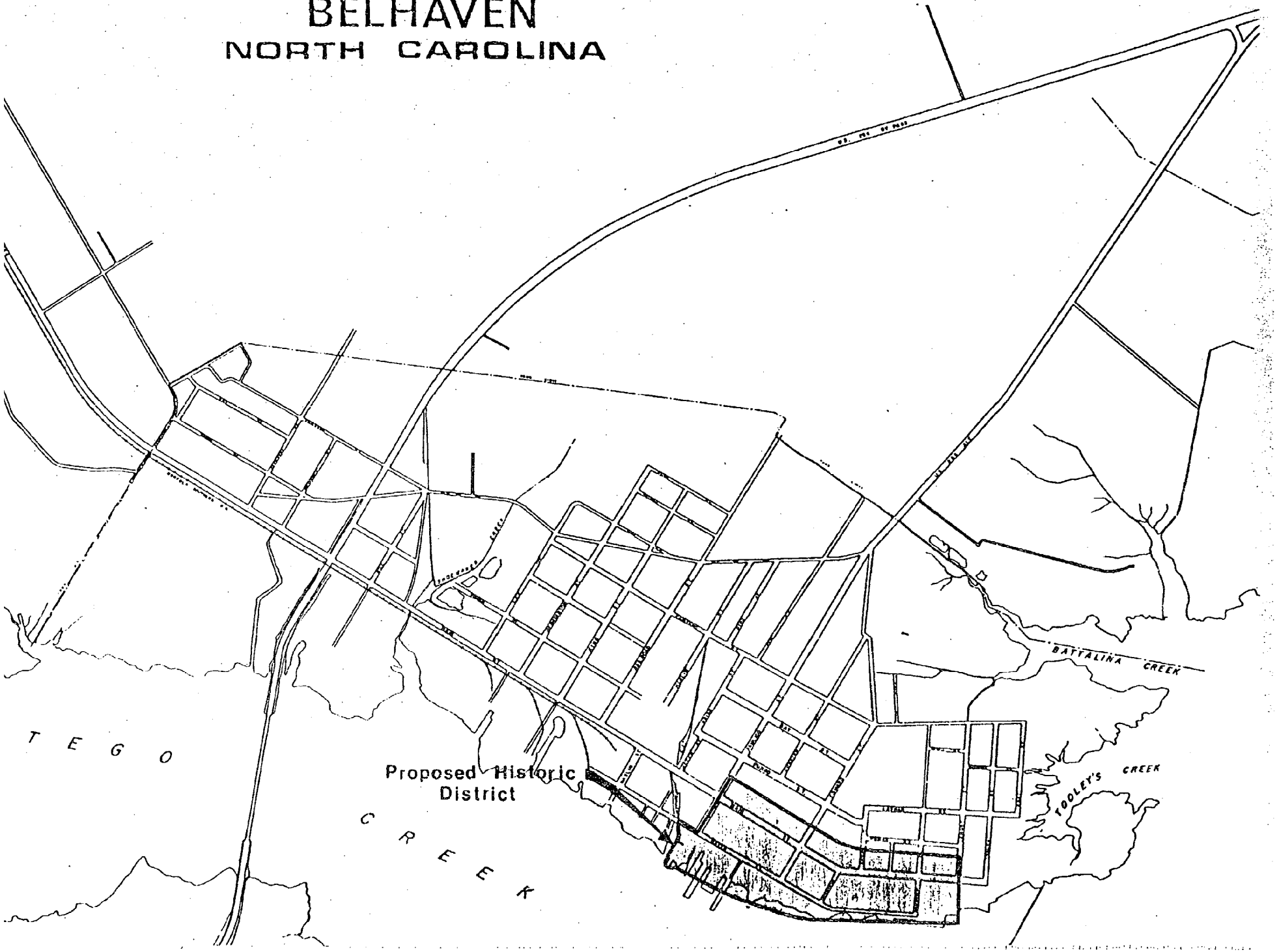
The cluster of inventory properties east of Pamlico Street presents the Town with possible justification for establishing a historic district in the zoning ordinance to provide for their protection. It is not within the scope of this plan to pass upon the architectural or historic value of any of these properties.

It is appropriate, however, to point out that the Main Street - Water Street area does have a distinct character in terms of residential building style, visual relationship to the river, and in terms of scale. The area is strongly reminisicent of the early 19th century "walking city", a pedestrian-scale city with narrow lots, predominantly 2-story construction, well-defined walkways, and proximity to the central business district and industrial activity on the waterfront. Its location and character are definitely urban, but the urbanness is softened by heavy foliage, distance from the most heavily travelled streets, and, of course, by the influence of the river.

Creation of a historic zoning district here is one way of assuring the maintenance of the area in its present form. The North Carolina General Statutes authorize such districts and the issuance of "Certificates of Appropriateness" for all construction within the district. It is recommended that the Town explore this possibility in depth during the next fiscal year. The study should include a more detailed inventory of architecturally significant buildings, possible district boundaries, alternatives for ordinance administration, design and preservation objectives, and district regulations.

In fiscal year 1981 the Town will request grant funds and technical assistance to further research the properties identified in the 1979 Historic Buildings Inventory and to prepare a draft historic zoning district. A historic district, of course, is not mandatory. If such a district is not created, the Town will discourge the spread of commercial and industrial development eastward into the Front Street - Main Street area as a matter of routine zoning policy. If necessary, community development funds may be sought to ensure its long-term viability as a residential neighborhood. These funds would be used, as appropriate, for the maintenance of basic public services and for structural rehabilitation of residences.

BELHAVEN
NORTH CAROLINA



In the coastal area, there are archeological and cultural resources of great importance which are underwater: shipwrecks, docks and wharves, etc. The N.C. Division of Archives and History offers the following advice to coastal communities:

> Underwater cultural resources often hold a wealth of information due to excellent artifact preservation and their normally undisturbed condition. Exploration and study of historic waterfronts, abandoned or wrecked vessels, etc., can shed light on many aspects of maritime history associated with this planning area which might otherwise be unknown. Therefore, the understanding and proper management of these irreplaceable cultural resources is extremely important to prevent their loss during future development.
>
> Disturbance of submerged bottom lands, particularly during new channel dredging and extensive waterfront development, should consider possible effects to underwater cultural resources during the earliest states of planning. In areas that have been used historically for maritime activities, domumentary investigations should be initiated to determine whether an underwater archaeological survey is necessary. Known shipwrecks, many of which are plotted on USGS maps or Coastal Geodetic Survey charts, should be avaided or investigated and assessed for historical significance prior to final planning stages.

The Division of Archives and History has noted the presence of a "known historic shipwreck" in Battalina Creek. To prevent the possibility of damage to this wreck in the event of a development proposal for this area, the local permit officer has been advised of the Division's interest and will act in accordance with applicable regulations. State and federal regulations governing development proposals which may impact sites and structures of historic, archeological, and cultural merit are listed in the appendix.

HURRICANE AND FLOOD EVACUATION NEEDS

Coastal North Carolina is frequently affected by hurricane-induced flooding. The barrier island chain is occasionally overwashed and bridges to the mainland have been rendered useless by storm water. Belhaven is on the mainland dozens of miles from the open ocean. The Town is in no danger of being cut-off from high ground as are communities further to the east. This safety is a matter of degree, however. Storm induced flooding of a degree requiring evacuation is a possibility though one of low probability. These conditions suggest the need for hurricane warning procedures and for evacuation plans.

For Belhaven, the options include (1) no plan at all, (2) preparation of a plan independent of the other units of government, and (3) joining Beaufort County and its other municipalities in the Beaufort County Hurricane Evacuation Plan.

The first alternative is simply dangerous. The second denies the benefits available from a county-wide system. Accordingly the Town has selected option 3 and joined the other units in the county evacuation plan.

The purpose of the plan is to provide for an orderly and coordinated evacuation of threatened areas. It establishes a system for alerting public officials the evacuation of the public when necessary, and the designation of shelters for evacuees.

Under the plan, the Mayor of Belhaven is a member of the "Control Group" whose responsibility is to exercise overall direction and control of evacuation operations and to institute other actions deemed necessary during a hurricane emergency.

RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

The 1976 CAMA plan discusses the economic base of the Belhaven Planning Area at length. It identifies the relative importance of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and tourism. Commercial fishing and associated processing and packing of seafood products emerged as the strongest components of the Belhaven economy.

Town policy with respect to natural resource production and management recognizes the close relationship between Belhaven resident's economic livelihood and the land and water resources of the area.

PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND

Several thousand acres of land in the northern part of the planning area are in agricultural use at this time. Principal crops are corn and wheat. There is nothing unique about these crops. They are grown throughout eastern North Carolina. Conversion of the land to non-farm uses would not irreparably damage the Town's economy nor deprive the state of some products which cannot be produced elsewhere.

Agricultural production per se is not a development issue for Belhaven in the same sense as, say, commercial fishing and substandard housing. It is more properly an issue for state and county government. Agricultural production, therefore, is not amenable to policy alternatives analysis by the Town since these are pre-empted by higher levels of government. Indirectly, of course, agriculture has economic implications for the Town through employment and property taxes generated by agricultural service industries. This is thought to be a separate issue, one of overall economic development, rather than agricultural.

Nevertheless, Town policy does tend to encourage continued agricultural production in the planning area through the Land Classification Map, zoning ordinance, and utility extension policies. Much of the unincorporated portion of the planning area is classified as rural on the Land Classification Map thereby giving agriculture a high priority for use of these areas. Utility

extensions into Rural areas (and reclassification of the land) would be made only in response to public health problems or upon clear showing of market demand that there is an insufficient quantity of land within the Town to accommodate the proposed development.

COMMERCIAL FOREST LAND

There is no commercial forest land in the Belhaven Planning Area. Some timber is produced from family farms. Since 1976 several hundred acres of wooded land west of U.S. 264 were cleared for field crops. This is consistent with the rural classification of land in this area. No further policy statements appear necessary with respect to commercial forestry.

MINERAL PRODUCTION AREAS

There are no major mineral extraction operations in the Belhaven Planning area. A small concrete plant has opened in the unincorporated part of the planning area on U.S. 264 Alternate. It occupies a site of approximately 2 acres in an area classified as Rural on the 1976 Land Classification Map. Its location in a rural area is consistent with the definition of that class found in 15 NCAC 7B .0204. No further policy statements appear necessary with respect to mineral production

COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

As noted elsewhere in this report, commercial fishing and associated industries are the strongest components of Belhaven's economy. Recreational fishing is also important in the community as an attraction for tourists.

It is the policy of the Town to take whatever steps are appropriate to maintain the vitality of the fishing industry in Belhaven. The Town's waterfront along Pantego Creek is obviously a factor in the industry's future. The Town must insure the safe passage of fishing vessels to and from the docks and it must insure the availability of public services and space on the land side to accommodate fishing per se and related businesses.

Analysis of the present situation suggests that fishing and related businesses need additional space on the waterfront to allow proper operations at present levels of activity and to allow future expansion. A half dozen firms are now crowded onto less than five hundred feet of frontage east of Pamlico Street. The shortage of land not only prohibits on-site expansion but also produces congestion in the form of inadequate parking space and difficult maneuvers for trucks which serve the firm's inland transportation needs. Additional land may also be required for construction of industrial wastewater pretreatment facilities, depending upon EPA requirements. Expansion of the fishing and related business area to the east is undesirable due to the adverse effects on the adjoining residential area. Expansion immediately to the west is blocked by the hospital property and the public boar ramp area at Wynn's Gut.

Clearly, the fishing industry's problems cannot be settled in this document. Much more detailed work is required. Toward this end, the Town of Belhaven offers to sponsor a community forum aimed at identifying problems, considering alternative solutions, and generating interest in designing a cooperative private-public sector solution. Specifically, it is proposed that the owners of waterfront businesses consider the development of a consolidated "Port of Belhaven" west of the hospital as part of the proposed waterfront industrial park.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The 1976 plan indicated rather conservative prospects for new growth and development in the Belhaven planning area. This was the result of:

- Population projections showing continued decline through the year 2000;
- Rigid interpretation of the land classification system;
- Inability of the Town to finance major sewer and water system improvements.

In this updated plan the Town takes a more pro-growth posture based upon the following factors:

- Population seems to be growing again in contrast to the previous long period of decline.
- The Town has gained some new manufacturing jobs in the past five years.
- The Town is engaged in a "201" wastewater treatment facility study.
- The enthusiastic reception of the Town's community development program indicates the feasibility of efforts to restore blighted areas of the Town to usefulness and attractiveness.

In taking a pro-growth stance, a number of specific issues arise. Fundamental to all is the Town's application for designation as a Growth Center under the North Carolina Balanced Growth Policy Act. If designated, it is assumed that the Town will receive a high priority for financial assistance from the state and federal governments to the proposed projects.

TYPE AND LOCATION OF DESIRED INDUSTRY

Virtually any growth in Belhaven must be supported by new jobs. These must be located in Belhaven or its immediate environs due to the Town's great distance from other populated centers along the Pamlico River.

The basic choices to be made here include identification of areas suitable for industrial development, the types of industries to be sought, and the level of involvement by Town government in the industrial development effort. Possible locations include the inland area along U.S. 264, the area west of N.C. 92, and the waterfront east of N.C. 92. Industry selection could be haphazard - essentially, no real selection - or it could be done based upon a comprehensive analysis of the Town's resources for specific types of industry. Finally, the level of activity by the Town could be low - serving merely in a review capacity over proposals by private developers. Alternately, it could take an active part in industrial promotion by devoting some of it planning budget to the program.

The best place in the planning area for the development of new industry is along the waterfront between N.C. 92 and Haslin Street. This area has been zoned for industry, served by water and sewer, and has access to rail, highway, and water transportation.

Belhaven will seek to attract new industry to this area, specifically those types of firms which can use the energy-efficient rail and water transportation facilities which are available here. Specific industrial groups to be sought cannot be stated at this time. However, it would seem appropriate to consider those related to fishing, agriculture, and perhaps forestry. The Town will ask the Economic Development Administration to assist in identifying specific industrial categories suited to this site through its "Industry-Community Match" computer program.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

Belhaven's first priority for public service (e.g., water and sewer) provision is to Developed and Transition areas within the current corporate limits (see Land Classification Map). The Town is now engaged in the second stage of a sewage treatment needs study, including an examination of alternatives for dealing with industrial wastes. The latter element will obviously affect the Town's ability to maintain existing industries and to attract new firms.

The Town's second priority for water and sewer extensions is to serve development beyond the current corporate limits. Given the slow rate of

population growth and the possible residential development in the Tooley's Creek area, it is believed that extensions beyond the corporate limits will be minimal in the 1980-1985 period. From 1985 to 1990, extensions into the area between US 264 and 264 Alternate are likely as the last vacant land in Town is developed.

Virtually any expansion of sewer and water treatment facilities will require federal and state financial assistance.

DESIRED URBAN GROWTH PATTERN

The policies outlined above imply the Town's desire to achieve a tightly clustered development pattern, focusing on the central business district. The alternative is a pattern of dispersal for new development. This would entail potentially high costs in terms of environmental damage, agricultural land losses, and energy consumption for transportation within the planning area. Finally, the Town is presently unable to finance major water and sewer extensions.

Under the clustered pattern, in-town areas would be zoned to permit relatively high density development. Outlying areas would be reserved for low density uses without water and sewer services, at least over the next five years.

REDEVELOPMENT OF CURRENTLY DEVELOPED AREAS

Belhaven recently began a community development program aimed at rehabilitating substandard houses and providing improved public services to blighted neighborhoods. This program was initiated in contrast to the "No Action" alternative under which rehabilitation would be left to the private market. The likely result of that course would have been no action by the market, either, and continued decline in the quality of housing for Belhaven citizens.

Belhaven proposes to continue this program over the next five years. In addition, the Town may wish to examine the feasibility of applying community development funds to non-residential areas - the central business district and the waterfront - to assure their continued economic usefulness.

COMMITMENT TO STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Erosion Control: Belhaven is particularly concerned about the erosion of its eastern waterfront. At one point, Front Street itself lies but a few feet from the water. Several homes are in danger of losing their foundations due to wave action. The Town will request technical assistance from the State of North Carolina in determining the allowable area to be reclaimed by filling and in designing appropriate stabilization measures. The alternative, to allow continued erosion and loss of property, is not a reasonable position for Town government.

Dredging: Development of an industrial park on the waterfront may require that the channel be dredged to allow tugs and barges to transport materials to and from new industries.

Maintenance of existing water-related businesses also will require regular dredging.

Other: There are no military facilities, highway improvements, or other port facilities planned for the Belhaven area.

CHANNEL MAINTENANCE

The Town supports the Corps of Engineers' program to maintain and improve the Intercoastal Waterway as an avenue of commercial and recreational traffic. Given the Town's heavy economic dependence upon water related industry, there is no real alternative to this position. The Town will assist the Corps and State agencies in maintaining adequate channels in the Belhaven area to the extent possible. Specifically, the Town will assist, if requested, in obtaining easements for work and in identifying and obtaining sites for "borrow" material and for deposition of "spoil" material.

TOURISM, WATERFRONT ACCESS

Beaufort County and Belhaven receive substantial economic benefits from tourism. Yet it is not a fully developed segment of the Town's economy: much additional economic benefit remains to be captured. The majority of Belhaven's tourism is the result of its location on the water. That location produces opportunities for hunting, fishing, sailing, and other outdoor recreational pursuits. Thus, the waterfront again figures prominently in Town development policy. A second basis for tourism is the Pamlico region's historic heritage. The Towns of Washington, Bath, and Belhaven all contain buildings and/or sites of historical and architectural significance. These attract many visitors throughout the year but particularly during the summer.

It is the policy of the Town to promote tourism as an important segment of the economy. Tourism, the waterfront, historic preservation and urban design are inextricably bound in Belhaven. As noted elsewhere in this document, the Town will consider the establishment of historic district in its zoning ordinance. A second project would be the preparation of a written history of the Town and of the buildings within the historic district. This might be undertaken by a local historical society rather than by Town government. The potential for guided walking tours of the historic area should also be evaluated after building documentation is complete.

In addition to the physical linkages between tourism and the water, Town policy should also be directed to visual linkages. The Town should seek to open up vistas toward Pantego Creek from city streets. One opportunity for a vista was lost years ago when the hospital was built at the foot of Allen Street.

The most important view of all - from Pamlico Street in the central business district - is now partially blocked by industrial buildings at Wynn's Gut. The development of an industria park and consolidated fishing port facilities to the west offers potential for the eventual re-opening of the Pamlico Street view. A Town park and promenade could be the featured re-use of the property along with an expanded recreational boat launching ramp.

Energy Facility Siting

As noted, a tentative proposal to construct a methanol plant using peat as a fuel has been made by a Beaufort County business firm. The methanol would be distilled from corn grown in this area. No plant site has yet been specified and it is not known whether it will be located within the Belhaven planning area. The Town has too little information about this proposal to take any firm policy stance at this time. In general terms, however, the Town tends to favor industrial growth to the extent that it can be accommodated within existing environmental law. Potential use of the railroad to serve this firm should also help to insure continued service to Belhaven, clearly a favorable factor in the Town's view. The Town will otherwise have to rely on the appropriate state agencies to keep it informed of the potential impacts of the proposal.

LAND CLASSIFICATION

LAND CLASSIFICATION

A land classification system has been developed as a means of assisting in the implementation of the policies adopted by the Town. By delineating land classes on a map, local government and its citizens can specify those areas where certain policies (local, state and federal) will apply. Although specific areas are outlined on a land classification map, it must be remembered that land classification is merely a tool to help implement policies and not a strict regulatory mechanism.

The designation of land classes allows the Town to illustrate its policy statements as to where and to what density it wants growth to occur, and where it wants to conserve natural and cultural resources by guiding growth.

The land classification system includes five broad classes. These may be subdivided into more specific land use designations. Any sub-classes which are used should be able to be aggregated back to the original five broad classes. The five general land classes are: Developed, transition, community, rural and conservation.

(1) DEVELOPED

(A) Purpose. The purpose of the developed class is to provide for continued intensive development and redevelopment of existing cities.

(B) Description. Areas to be classified developed include lands currently developed for urban purposes at or approaching a density of 500 dwellings per square mile that are provided with usual municipal or public services including at least public water, sewer, recreational facilities, police and fire protection. Areas which exceed the minimum density but which do not have public sewer service may best be divided into a separate class to indicate that although they have a developed character, they will need sewers in the future.

(2) TRANSITION

(A) Purpose. The purpose of the transition class to provide for future intensive urban development within the ensuing ten years on lands that are most suitable and that will be scheduled for provision of necessary public utilities and services. The transition lands also provide for additional growth when additional lands in the developed class are not available or when they are severely limited for development.

(B) Description.

(i) Lands to be classified transition may include: (1) lands currently having urban services, and (2) other lands necessary to accommodate the urban population and economic growth anticipated within the planning jurisdiction over the ensuing ten year period.

(ii) Lands classified transition to help meet the demand for developable anticipated population and economic growth must: (1) be served by public water, sewer, and other urban services including public streets, and (2) be generally free from severe physical limitations for urban development. In addition, the transition class should not include: (1) lands of high potential for agriculture, forestry, or mineral extraction, or land falling within extensive rural areas being managed commercially for these uses, when other lands are available; (2) lands where urban development might result in major or irreversible damage to natural systems or processes of more than local concern.

(iii) In determining the amount of additional transition lands necessary to meet projected urban population and economic growth, the Town may utilize estimates of average future urban population density that are based upon local land policy, existing patterns and trends of urban development, and densities specified in local zoning, if any; an estimate of additional Transition class lands should be based upon a guideline density of 2,000 persons or 500 dwellings per square mile.

(C) Discussion. The developed and transition classes should be the only lands under active consideration for intensive urban development requiring urban services. The area within these classes is where detailed local land use and public investment planning must occur. State and Federal expenditures on projects associated with urban development (water, sewer, urban street systems, etc.) will be guided to these areas. Large amounts of vacant land suitable for urban development within the Developed class should be taken into account when calculating the amount of additional lands needed to accommodate projected growth. The total area shown as Transition should be equal to the land needed for proposed population increases that can not be accommodated in the vacant developed areas. The designation of Transition lands will be a very difficult and political process. Counties and municipalities with declining populations may show some limited transition lands as an inducement for future growth. As will be the case in all areas, however, the amount of transition lands shown should remain within reasonable limits, taking into account any significant amounts of undeveloped lands within the developed class.

(3) Community.

(A) Purpose. The purpose of the community class is to provide for clustered land development to help meet housing, shopping, employment, and public service needs within the rural areas of the county.

(B) Description. Lands to be classified community are those areas within the rural areas of planning jurisdictions characterized by a small grouping of mixed land uses, (residences, general store, church, school, etc.), and which are suitable and appropriate for small clusters of rural development not requiring municipal sewer service.

(C) Discussion. It should be stressed that the community class applies to clustered rural development which usually occurs at crossroads. Some "communities" that nonetheless should not be classified developed or transition may have, or may require, public services to correct an existing condition or to avert an anticipated public health problem. Many of these communities might have their own water system because the density of the development precludes having both private wells and septic tanks. Due to the small size of most communities, it might suffice to identify them by a symbol on the land classification map.

(4) Rural

(A) Purpose. The purpose of the rural class is to provide for agriculture, forest management, mineral extraction and other low intensity uses. Residences may be located within "rural" areas where urban services are not required and where natural resources will not be permanently impaired.

(B) Description. Lands that can be identified as appropriate for resource management and allied uses include lands with high potential for agriculture, forestry, or mineral extraction; lands with one or more limitations that would make development costly and hazardous; and lands containing irreplaceable, limited, or significant natural, recreational or scenic resources not otherwise classified.

(C) Discussion. The rural class is the broadest of the five classes. In order to manage these lands effectively local governments will be encouraged to create sub-classes within the rural class. For example, the rural class could be subdivided into two classes, rural-production to provide for the effective management of large agricultural, forestry, and mineral extraction areas, etc., and rural-residential for low density rural residences.

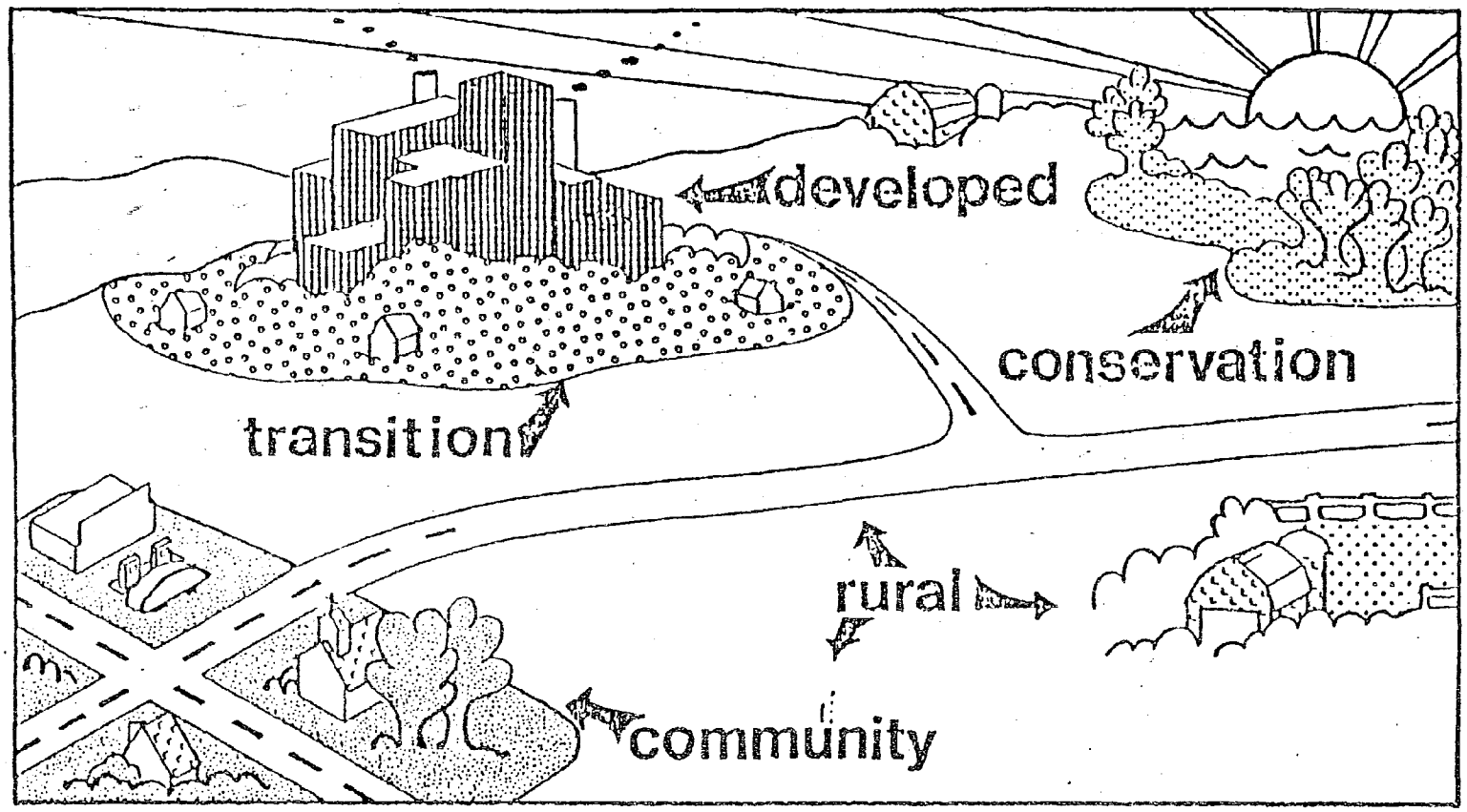
(5) Conservation

(A) Purpose. The purpose of the conservation class is to provide for effective long-term management of significant limited or irreplaceable areas. This management may be needed because of its natural, cultural, recreational, productive or scenic values. These areas should not be identified as transition lands in the future.

(B) Description. The conservation class should be applied to lands that contain: major wetlands; essentially undeveloped shorelands that are unique, fragile, or hazardous for development; necessary wildlife habitat or areas that have a high probability for providing necessary habitat conditions; publicly owned water supply water sheds and aquifers; and forest lands that are undeveloped and will remain undeveloped for commercial purposes.

SUMMARY OF LAND CLASSIFICATIONS

Land Classes	Purpose	Characteristics	Services
Developed	To provide for continued intensive development and redevelopment of existing cities	Lands currently developed for urban purposes with urban services available	Usual municipal or public services including water, sewer, recreation facilities, police, and fire protection
Transition	To provide for future intensive urban development on lands that are most suitable and that are most likely to be scheduled for provision of necessary public utilities and services	Lands being developed for urban purposes but which do not yet have usual urban services, lands necessary to accommodate population growth for the next ten year period, lands which can be readily serviced with usual urban services, lands generally free from severe physical limitations for development	Usual municipal or public services to be made available at the time of development or soon thereafter
Community	To provide for clustered mix uses to help shopping, housing, employment and public service needs within the surrounding area	Lands characterized by a cluster of residential and commercial land uses in rural areas	Limited municipal type services such as fire protection, etc. may have public water but no public sewer system. Public sewers possible only to correct an existing or projected public health hazard
Rural	To provide for agriculture, forest management, mineral extractions and various low intensity uses on large sites including residences where urban services are not required and natural resources will not be unduly impaired	Lands identified as appropriate locations for natural resource management and allied uses, lands with one or more limitations that would make development costly and hazardous	Private septic tanks and wells. Other services such as rescue squads, police and fire protection, etc.
Conservation	To provide for effective long-term management of tracts of land consistent with their significant, limited, or irreplaceable natural, recreational, productive or scenic resources with the intent that they will not be identified as Transition lands in the immediate future	Lands that contain major wetlands, necessary wildlife habitats, publicly owned water-supply watersheds and acquifers, lands providing significant recharge to groundwater, and lands which contain significant natural scenic, recreational or productive resources	No services and limited access only



Under the land classification system all land will be placed into one of five classes.

The Developed class will include existing urban areas which are currently supplied with a full range of public services including water and sewer facilities.

The Transition class will identify those areas with land good for urban development which will be supplied with public services to accommodate future population and economic growth.

The Community class will include existing clustered rural residential and commercial areas such as crossroads developments. These areas may require a public water system but public sewers should not be allowed.

The Rural class will identify those lands good for agriculture, forestry, mining, and other land uses such as rural housing depending on private wells and septic tanks.

The Conservation class will identify those areas which due to their significant, limited, or irreplaceable natural, recreational, or scenic resources need to be protected.

LAND CLASSIFICATION MAP
AND
RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The 1980 Land Classification Map contains numerous changes from the 1976 map. These changes do not imply extensive new development over the past five years nor the extension of water and sewer services to new areas. The changes proposed here reflect two complementary ideas: (1) the Coastal Resources Commission's revised criteria for mapping the various classes of land, and (2) a re-interpretation of the existing land use pattern.

The 1976 map was based upon a strict application of the commission's then current guidelines relating current and future population and services to the various classes. The result of that process was a map which tended to illustrate ground coverage by structures rather than the use of land. Residential areas were mapped often without reference to yards, storage areas, home garden plots and accessory uses of the property. Vacant lots within otherwise developed blocks were classified as transitional. Commercial areas were mapped without reference to required off-street parking and loading space. Open space in public ownership (e.g. a park) was shown as transitional when, in fact, it was developed for a low intensity open space use.

The 1980 map views the land use pattern in broader terms. Land within the Town is mapped largely on a block-by-block basis, rather than the finer distinctions attempted in 1976. The map also employs the revised classification guidelines which acknowledge the presence of some vacant land within developed areas. Generally, if at least half of a block is in use for urban purposes, and if water and sewer are available to that block, the entire block is classified as developed.

Some large tracts along the waterfront are subdivided into transitional and developed land. These tend to distinguish the actual "in-use" portions of major

commercial and industrial holdings from those which are aviailable for new development or expansion of existing firms.*

The relationship between the land classification map and the development policies is clear and simple. First, the extensive mapping of developed and transitional land within the current corporate limits is consistent with the Planning Board's desire to maintain a compact settlement pattern. By providing urban services only to areas now within the Town, high density development on the periphery should be discouraged.

This implies and requires, however, that the Town must be allowed by state and federal agencies to develop land which in other parts of the North Carolina coast might be considered undevelopable for ecological reasons. These areas include (1) the waterfront west of Haslin Street including any marshland, which is proposed for industrial development, and (2) the land north of Tooley's Creek** which is proposed for residential development. In summary, the Land Classification Map and Town development policies call for the treatment of these areas as an urban waterfront and allowing for the development of the land consistent with that view.

The rural classification of most land north of the current corporate limit is consistent with Town policy recognizing the importance of agricultural production to the local economy. It is also consistent with market forces which have shown virtually no interest in this area for intensive development over the past ten years.

South of Pantego Creek, a ribbon of conservation is shown at the water's edge. Maps from the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development indicate the presence of marshland here. As this area is undeveloped at this time and lacking utilities, the land should remain in a natural state. However, like that in Belhaven itself, the maps are of suspect accuracy. Therefore, the

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* "Available" at least in the sense that they are vacant at this time.

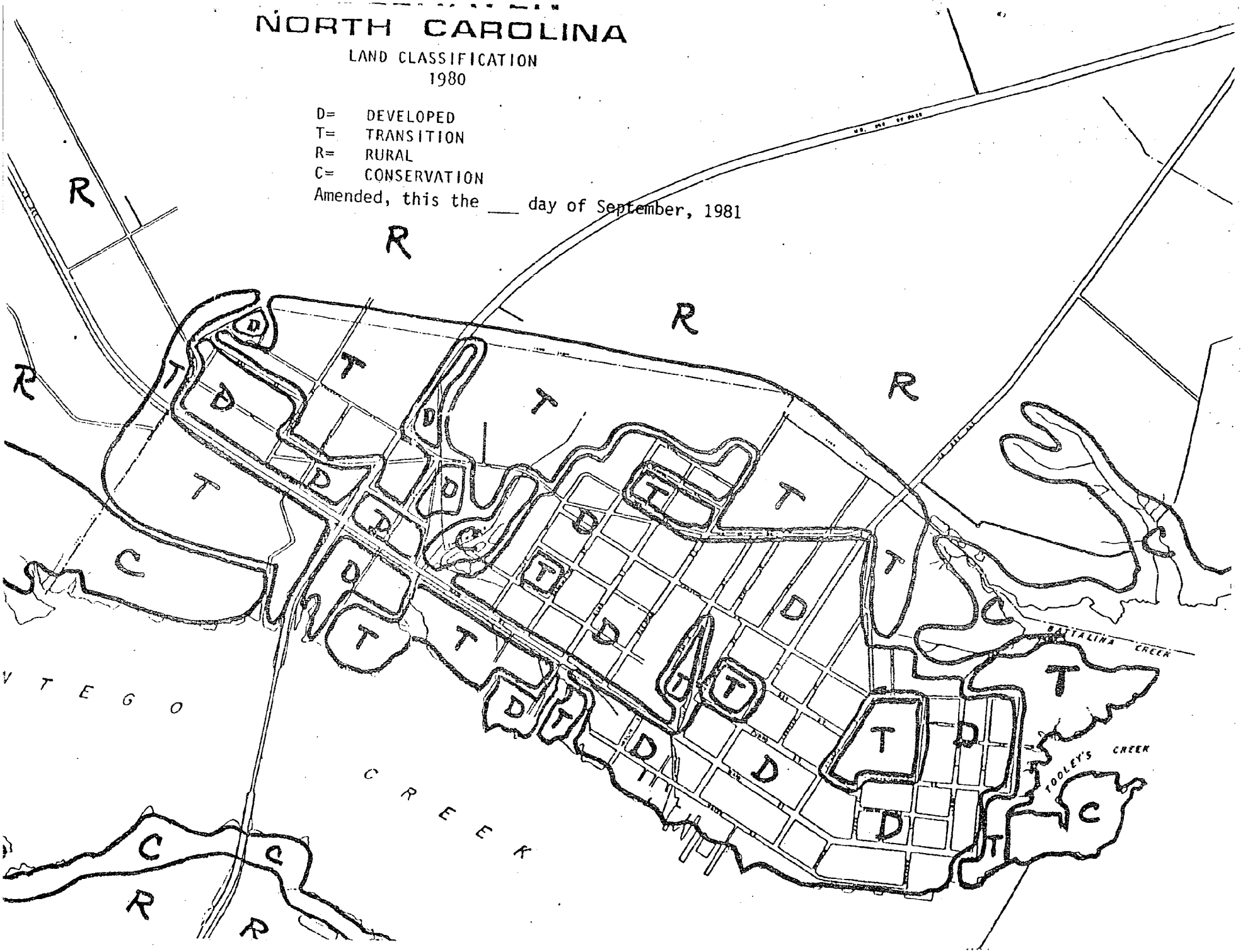
** Amended by Belhaven Town Council September 21, 1981.

NORTH CAROLINA

LAND CLASSIFICATION
1980

D= DEVELOPED
T= TRANSITION
R= RURAL
C= CONSERVATION

Amended, this the ___ day of September, 1981



appropriate state and federal agencies should inspect this area and prepare accurate maps of the locations of Areas of Environmental Concern.

All other land south of Pantego Creek is classified as rural. This again is consistent with the policy of not undertaking a major utility extension program at this time. This area is somewhat different from the northern rural area in that there have been several expressions of interest in developing year-round and/or vacation homes here. The Town will evaluate any development proposals in this area on a case-by-case basis if the area is retained within the Town's planning jurisdiction. There is some question whether the Town will benefit from its continued inclusion. Since the area is unlikely to be annexed in the foreseeable future, the Town could be saddled with the costs of regulating development there and never receive any benefit from the expenditure. This issue will be taken up as part of a re-evaluation of the Town's development codes.

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