



Making Pitt Fit Community Garden

Pitt County's first Community Garden was launched in Spring of 2011. The Community Garden is an area of land made available to members of a community to grow vegetables or flowers. Upon receiving grant monies, the Pitt County Community Garden Advisory Committee was formed and work on the garden project began. The Community Garden Advisory Committee included representatives from the Cooperative Extension, Pitt County Health Department, Pitt County Planning, Pitt County Engineering and Community Schools and Recreation; Council on Aging; Master Gardeners; a teacher from Wintergreen Primary School; and Soil and Water Conservation.

A primary purpose of the garden is intended to enhance healthy living in Pitt County. The garden has been strategically located adjacent to the Alice F. Keene District Park and the Pitt County Farmer's Market. A major component of the Community Garden is the focus on intergenerational gardening between senior citizens and school-aged children. The garden's proximity to Wintergreen Primary and Intermediate Schools and the Pitt County Council on Aging encourages this initiative. Grant funds allowed the advisory committee to begin ground preparations for the garden including digging a well, installing sub-surface drainage and hiring Joni Young-Torres as the Community Garden Technician. Joni is responsible for monitoring the day to day operations of the garden, as well as working with teachers and seniors on the intergenerational component of the program. She also provides educational sessions for all interested gardeners on how to plant, nurture and harvest their crops.

There are approximately 80 (4 x 20) plots available in the garden and all plots were leased during the garden's first growing season in 2011. The garden site is fenced with a water supply, hoses, storage sheds, compost and mulch piles and a variety of community gardening tools. The garden is meant to provide citizens with the opportunity to grow their own vegetables, thereby encouraging them to increase physical activity and make healthy eating choices. In addition, participants are encouraged to support the nutritional needs of others by contributing surplus produce to the food bank or soup kitchen in Pitt County.

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2011 Pitt County Planning Department Annual Report

On December 5, 2011, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously adopted the 2030 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This marked the first major update of the plan since 2002. Since that time, several issues were identified that necessitated an update to the plan, including, but not limited to, the adoption of the Pitt County Zoning Ordinance, new floodplain maps, and increased development and zoning activity in specific areas of the County.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan serves as an integral guide for development in Pitt County, and establishes a planning horizon of 20 years. The North Carolina General Statutes recognize the importance of long-range, comprehensive planning by requiring that all zoning map amendments (ie. rezonings) be consistent with an adopted land use plan. Therefore, it is important that the plan reflect the County's current vision and priorities for development.

The plan establishes specific goals and objectives for eight areas of concern within the County. These areas are: Growth and Development, Land Use, Transportation, Appearance, Community Services and Facilities, Natural Environment, Housing, and Community Health. Also included are goals and objectives for implementing and administering the plan. The proposed goals and objectives for the Community Health section were developed to assist in implementing the Pitt County Health Department's Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) initiative which aims to increase levels of physical activity, improve nutrition, and decrease obesity rates within the County.

The plan also provides a Future Land Use map, which is consistently consulted when reviewing proposed development plans, particularly rezoning proposals. Future land use designations in the 2002 plan, such as the "Rural Commercial/Crossroad Community" designation, were revised to better reflect the pattern of growth and development that is anticipated throughout the County over the next 20 years.

During the update process, the Planning Board and Planning staff allowed for extensive public review and input. Two series of public forums were conducted at various locations throughout the County, and attendees were asked to complete two community surveys. The surveys were also available to be completed on the Planning Department's website and staff received very valuable input on the proposed update.





Pitt County Faces Redistricting

With the delivery of Census 2010 Public Law Data in early 2011, it was determined that Pitt County's population growth and shift since the 2000 census would require the County to redraw local voter district boundaries. Redistricting involves redrawing the districts from which public officials are elected. Redistricting is mandatory under the United States Constitution's 14th Amendment, also known as the Equal Protection Clause. In addition, the Pitt County Board of Education (BOE) also elected to follow the Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) redistricting process.

The Pitt County Planning Department was responsible for preparing the redistricting plan with guidance from the County and Board of Education Legal staff. Deborah Stagner with Tharrington Smith, LLP was brought on to ensure the County's proposed plan would gain preclearance from the Department of Justice and assist with the submission process.

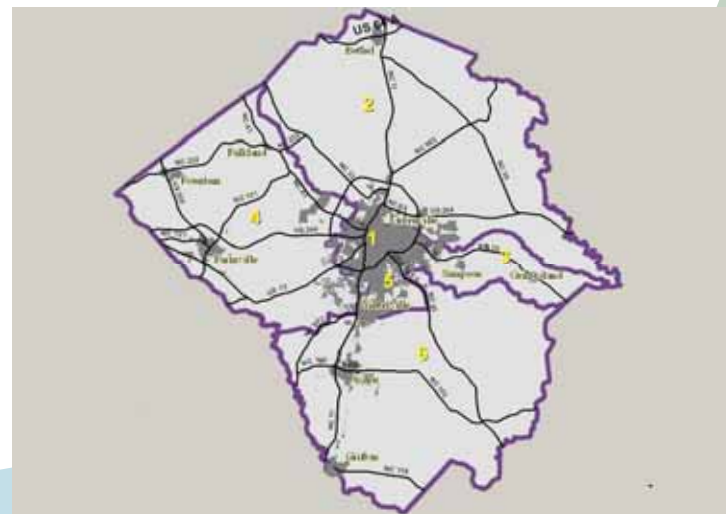
For More Information Regarding the Redistricting Process or to View the Map, Visit our Website:

www.pittcountync.gov/planning/demographics/voterredistricting.shtml

On July 11, the Board of County Commissioners authorized staff to proceed with Public Input Sessions and authorized the release of Redistricting Plan 1-B for public comment and suggestions. Five public input sessions were held throughout Pitt County. County citizens were encouraged to participate by providing general comments or suggestions regarding the proposed plan, or specific comments related to the individual proposed district boundaries. In addition to the to the public input sessions, the County provided redistricting information via the Planning Department website and PittTV.

On August 22, 2011, the BCC approved Plan 1-B and the changes to its voting districts, and directed staff to send the plan to the U.S. Department of Justice for review. Likewise, the BOE approved the proposed redistricting plan on September 19, 2011. Pitt County submitted the package to the Department of Justice on October 31, 2011 for preclearance.

On December 30, 2011, the Department of Justice, by way of letter, approved Pitt County's redistricting plan submission. These new voter district boundaries will be utilized for the 2012 elections.



Community Development in 2011

In July Pitt County completed its 18th replacement home through a volunteer-based housing initiative with Grifton Mission Ministries and our first with College Park Baptist Church from Winston Salem, North Carolina. This replacement home was made possible through volunteer labor and donated resources provided by the two groups, paired with USDA-Rural Development funding and assistance from the Town of Winterville and Pitt County.

Under the leadership of Billy Tarlton, Grifton Mission Ministries is an independent, inter-faith, non-profit organization helping economically disadvantaged families with critical home repairs. Since 2003, Grifton Mission Ministries has partnered with Pitt County to rehabilitate a total of 87 homes and constructed 18 new homes for clients in its Community Development Program. In total, Grifton Mission Ministries' volunteers have donated over \$900,000 worth of man hours since 2003, and most recently, Grifton Mission Ministries, serving as the general contractor, partnered with College Park Baptist Church to provide construction materials and skilled labor to construct a new home located at 2403 Myrtle Street in Winterville.

College Park Baptist Church has a long history of building homes for needy families. Over 100 adult and youth members of College Park Baptist Church volunteered to travel to Winterville, North Carolina during the holiday week of July 3rd-9th, 2011. The Church members donated their own building materials, labor, and construction expertise in efforts to build a home for a Pitt County citizen in need. The volunteers worked tirelessly through extreme heat to help provide a safe, decent, and sanitary home for the citizen. Since 1989, members of College Park Baptist Church have constructed homes for families in need, this being the first in Pitt County.



North Carolina Flood Mapping Program

Pitt County received an updated flood insurance study (FIS) and flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) on June 8, 2011. These updated panels reflect proposed changes to floodplain boundaries and/or changes to the base flood elevations within Pitt County. As a result, Pitt County held a public information session on October 19, 2011 and received appeals or protests of the preliminary maps through December 19, 2011. The new FIRMs will be under review with regard to all appeals and protests through mid-2012, and are anticipated to be formally adopted by September of 2012.

