



Pitt County Planning Department

**1998
Annual Report**



**PITT COUNTY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**
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JAMES F. RHODES, AICP
DIRECTOR

February, 1999

To All Interested Individuals:

On behalf of the Pitt County Planning Board and Planning staff, it is my pleasure to present the Pitt County Planning Department's Annual Report for 1998. This report highlights accomplishments and activities of the Department over the past year. We are proud of the various projects with which we have been involved - ranging from day-to-day development review administration to E-911 Addressing to transportation, recreation, and environmental planning efforts. We are especially pleased with the results of our involvement with the Pitt County Special Census and with the newly-amended Manufactured Home Park Ordinance.

Please take a few minutes to review our 1998 Annual Report to learn more about planning-related functions in Pitt County. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

James Rhodes, AICP
Planning Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PLANNING BOARD

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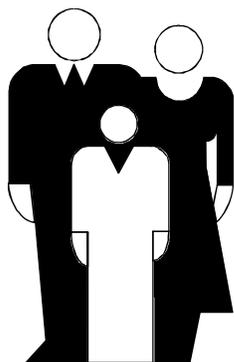
PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF

James Rhodes, Director
Beth Buck, Administrative Assistant
Eddy Davis, Planner II
Glen Moore, Planner I
E. Wayne Harrison, Natural Resources Coordinator
David McGowan, Road Sign Coordinator
Tracy Cash, Planning Technician
Traci Belch, Planning Technician
Eli Johnson, Part-time Intern

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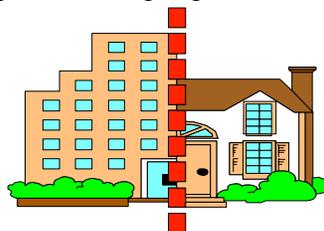
Major Departmental Accomplishments and Activities



Pitt County Special Census - After the Board of County Commissioners' decision in December, 1997, to conduct a countywide Special Census, planning staff began performing and coordinating various activities for which the county was responsible in January. First, two groups were formed to assist with the administration of the Special Census. The Special Census Task Force, led by planning staff, served such functions as recruiting census workers, scheduling testing sites, establishing office space and procuring office equipment. The Public Information Committee, coordinated by the Public Information Office, consisted of municipal and community leaders who relayed pertinent information to their constituents. Throughout the eight-month process, which culminated with the official count in late August, staff maintained a close working relationship with the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The final results of the April 30, 1998 special census proved to be worth the efforts expended during the process. Once the population counts were adjusted to coincide with the July 1st, 1997 estimates for other local governments, the overall county population, as compared to the 1996 figures, increased by more than 5,100 people, while the unincorporated (rural) population grew by over 9,000. This growth is estimated to account for roughly \$5 million additional state revenues over the next three years.

Land Use Planning Efforts - Upon discussion of the short time frame for completing the NC 11 North Corridor Plan and of the need for land use planning in other areas of the County, the Board of County Commissioners agreed to hire a consulting firm to assist with these land use planning efforts. The Wooten Company was hired to provide assistance to Planning staff in the development of land use plans for the NC 11 North Corridor and the Northwest Planning Area, along with zoning regulations to implement the plans. According to the proposed work program, the NC 11 North Corridor Plan and accompanying land use controls should be completed by the end of 1999, while the plan and regulations for the Northwest Planning Area should be finished in mid-2000.



Revised Manufactured Home Park Ordinance - On February 1, 1998, Planning staff implemented the revised Pitt County Manufactured Home Park Ordinance which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on November 17, 1997. In early 1997, the Planning Board and staff embarked on a year-long effort to revise the Ordinance which had been without major revisions since its adoption in 1972. Some of the major changes included minimum space size requirements for individual spaces, review fees, improved design and construction standards, and construction plan submittal requirements.

During mid-1998, the Planning Board recognized safety issues regarding hazardous areas within or adjacent to manufactured home parks (i.e., ponds, drainage ditches, highways, etc.). The newly-enacted regulations had no provisions for the Board to require safety fencing for such areas. Staff researched the issue and presented the Board with a text amendment that afforded the opportunity to require safety fencing within manufactured home parks on a case by case basis. The Board of County Commissioners accepted the Planning Board's recommendation and unanimously adopted the amendment to the Manufactured Home Park Ordinance with an effective date of October 5, 1998.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Planning staff members, along with the assistance of The Wooten Company, submitted a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for scattered site housing needs throughout unincorporated Pitt County in October. Staff compiled information on county-wide housing needs with the assistance of other county agencies, such as Social Services, Public Health, and Inspections Departments. More than sixty residents contacted the Planning Department requesting assistance, however several did not meet the eligibility requirements. The Wooten Company conducted an interview and inspected residences to determine qualification for eligible applicants. Ten homes with the most severe needs and whose residents had the lowest household incomes were included in the application. The Board of County Commissioners approved the submittal of the application and committed \$17,500 to the project. Award notification is expected in March, 1999.



E-911 Addressing Program - Staff continues to maintain and update the E-911 addressing database for the County. This includes entering all new building sites into the database and calculating assigned addresses. As of the end of 1998, over 23,000 structures were included in the County database.

Staff also continues to provide addressing services inside the municipal limits of Falkland and Grimesland as part of their conversion to the County addressing system in 1997. Staff proceeded to complete the necessary field work for the Town of Fountain after town officials requested address conversions in 1998. Address notifications are expected to be sent to affected property owners in early 1999.



E-911 Addressing Atlas - Upon completion of address assignments in the unincorporated portion of the County, staff began development of an atlas to assist emergency service providers in understanding the new E-911 addressing system. Using the Tax Assessor's Office map that divides the county into segments, staff began the task of producing maps for the atlas. Keeping in mind that these maps will be used during emergency response, it was important that the atlas was easy to read, while at the same time providing pertinent information that would allow the emergency responder to find an exact location. Elements on the maps include roads, road names, address ranges for the roads and individual addresses for structures. Staff will continue to distribute the atlases to each fire and rescue department in early 1999.

Greenville Urban Area Technical Coordinating Committee - James Rhodes continued to serve as a county representative, and Eddy Davis participated as an alternate member, on the Technical Coordinating Committee for the Metropolitan Planning Organization of the Greenville Urban Area. During 1998, the committee reviewed and offered recommendations to the Transportation Advisory Committee for such issues as the realignment of NC 33 West near the Pitt-Greenville Airport, the closure of Reedy Branch Road, and improvements to Firetower Road. Planning staff also provided assistance with the Internal Origin and Destination Study.



TEA-21 Teleconference - In late 1998, the new federal transportation law, TEA-21, was approved to replace ISTEA. Planning staff coordinated the local broadcast of a teleconference on the new law at Pitt Community College. Over a dozen local and state officials attended the teleconference which provided details on new and expanded programs, and associated funding allocations under TEA-21.

Pitt County GIS Steering Committee - In an effort to improve and direct the development of the County's Geographic Information System (GIS), staff members from various departments, including Planning, reactivated the GIS Steering Committee in late 1998. Among its most pressing objectives, the

committee will perform a needs assessment throughout the County offices and facilities to prioritize needed resources and to develop budget proposals.

Voice of America (VOA) Site C - After having submitted an application to the National Park Service in October, 1997, Pitt County and the City of Greenville received constructive conveyance of the 590-acre VOA Site C property on March 2. The Pitt County Planning Department was one of the agencies designated to oversee the maintenance and security of the site. County and City staff also investigated various factors affecting the site's development potential. Just prior to the deed transfer in late June, officials with East Carolina University voiced their interest in the property and its suitability for an agromedicine research facility. On June 23, the Board of County Commissioners and City Council jointly agreed to return the deed to the Federal Government to provide East Carolina University an opportunity to



obtain the site. Due to the lengthy transfer process, the Pitt County Planning Department continued to coordinate the security and maintenance of the property throughout 1998.

Recreation Master Plan - Planning staff provided technical assistance to the Community Schools and Recreation Department for the development of the County's first recreation plan. The plan is a follow-up to the 1996 survey of County residents concerning recreation needs. An East Carolina University Recreation and Leisure Systems class was responsible for compiling and drafting the document. It is anticipated that the plan will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in early 1999.

Coastal Carolina Trail - The Coastal Carolina Trail (CCT) Committee continued its efforts in 1998 to develop a regional rail-trail project to connect Martin, Pitt and Beaufort Counties. In January, James Rhodes, as Chairman of the CCT Committee, provided the North Carolina Rail Trail Executive Committee with a summary of the proposed 30-mile project. After the meeting, members observed a portion of the rail corridor in the Stokes community.

From January to July, 1998, CCT committee members contacted landowners along the six-mile target area between Stokes and Pictolus. Nearly all affected property owners granted permission for the committee to traverse the rail corridor. On March 1st, over 60 people participated in the walking assessment conducted along the 2.5 mile segment south of Stokes. On July 18th, 12 participants completed the 3.5 mile assessment further southward to Pictolus. The two assessments revealed that the majority of the railbed was well-maintained, except for several large holes, a few fallen trees across the corridor, and the bisection of one area due to canal construction.

The CCT Master Plan Subcommittee continued its work to develop a master plan for the entire 30-mile trail and feasibility study for the six-mile target area. To help finalize and publish the master plan and feasibility study documents, the Coastal Carolina Trail Committee received \$6,500 from the North Carolina Division of Tourism.



Changes and updates to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps - E. Wayne Harrison, Natural Resources Coordinator, and other staff members responded to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) request to identify Pitt County Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) which warrant revision and/or update. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that communities submit such information to FEMA once every five years. After reviewing current county maps, staff identified several map updates which would improve administration of the County's flood prevention regulations. Suggested improvements included the update of the extraterritorial jurisdictions for municipalities; current centerline network showing major US highways, new streets and relocation of some existing roads; and any detailed studies of potential flood areas that

have been provided by different agencies. FEMA was also informed that Pitt County possesses digital data to assist with the map revisions. Pitt County's needs will be compared to other communities' for prioritization of map updates.

Along with unincorporated areas of Pitt County, staff also administers the flood prevention ordinance for the Town of Grifton. In late 1998, FEMA notified town officials that their FIRM and Floodway Map were revised. Since the town had experienced repetitive flooding along the Contentnea Creek during Hurricanes Bonnie and Fran. The revised maps became effective November 20th, 1998. Staff informed local surveyors and engineers of the changes and started enforcing the maps as of the effective date. With the revised maps and continuing enforcement of the local flood ordinance, the town may continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.



Certification from North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers - Natural Resources Coordinator E. Wayne Harrison attended several workshops sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Floodplain Managers in 1998. The workshops were designed for review and discussion of the home study course titled *Carrying Out Floodplain Management in your Locality*. Wayne completed the home study course in August and successfully passed the certification test. To date, he is one of forty-five people in North Carolina to achieve this certification.

Participation in the Mid-Neuse Nonpoint Source Team - Staff continued to participate in the Mid-Neuse Nonpoint Source Team meetings this past year. The team is comprised of individuals from local and state governments as well as members of the private sector who have interest in the Mid-Neuse Basin. The group is charged with determining the impacts of the recently implemented rules regarding nutrient loading in the Neuse River Basin. The North Carolina Division of Water Quality is the lead agency for this effort. The team determined that the best method to evaluate the impact of the rules was to select a waterbody to monitor for several months. During this monitoring period, it is anticipated that any impact of these rules can be determined by the change in nutrient content in the waterbody. The team has selected Stoney Creek in Wayne County, with the installation of the monitoring equipment to occur sometime after July, 1999.



Participation in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin stakeholders meetings - The North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) notified staff of stakeholders meetings which are to allow local governments input on new rules for the Tar-Pamlico River Basin. The proposed rules are designed to decrease the amount of nutrients in the river. For this effort, DWQ invited individuals with particular interests in the Tar-Pamlico Basin to a series of meetings to assist in developing recommendations to forward to the State's Environmental Management Commission. Staff has been participating in the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control group as well as the Stormwater Control group to provide input from the County's perspective.