

Comprehensive Plan & Comprehensive Transportation Plan Steering Committee

Meeting Summary

April 3, 2012 | Sawyers Creek Fire Station | 11:30am-1:30pm

STEERING COMMITTEE ATTENDEES

Charlie Bauman, Economic Developer
Butch Flythe
Gloria Gallop
Joy Greenwood, Dismal Swamp State Park
Janice Hassell
David Moehring
Tony Perry, Sheriff
Mike Renshaw
Waverly M. Sawyer
Donna Stewart, Tourism Devpmt. Authority
Sam West
Steve Lambert, ARPC

TECHNICAL STAFF/CONSULTANTS

Dan Porter, Planning Director
Dave Parks, Flood & Zoning Officer
Roger Waldon, Clarion Associates
Leigh Anne King, Clarion Associates

1. WELCOME

A brief welcome was provided by Dan Porter who introduced Roger Waldon and Leigh Anne King from Clarion Associates.

2. PRESENTATION OF COUNTY DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS REPORT AND UPDATE ON US 158 STRATEGY HIGHWAY CORRIDOR DISCUSSION

Dan Porter conveyed to the committee that county department heads had been sent a summary of the Alternative Scenarios Report for their review and comment. Specifically, they were asked to comment on how the scenarios would impact their operations. The transmittal of this report coincided with preparation of departmental budgets, so only one department head was able to respond. The Director of Public Works reaffirmed what was in the report regarding public water, wastewater and stormwater. The committee will be updated as more responses are provided.

Dan then discussed the progress of the US 158 Strategic Highway Corridor committee. US 158 is designated by the state as a Strategic Highway Corridor. This designation results in the need to ensure that state and regional traffic can be easily moved across the county along this east-west corridor. This designation and the developed nature of US 158 triggered discussions about the need for an Alternative 158 route that would have limited access (few driveways) to more efficiently move traffic. There are plans to widen US 158 across the county through to the NC 34 split to four lanes, and another project focuses on widening the road into Currituck County. Ivo Dernev, of NC-DOT provided maps of six

conceptual US 158 Alternate routes at the last committee meeting: two in the north and four in the south county. A recent meeting of the US 158 Strategic Highway Corridor Committee reduced the number of alternatives to two in the south county and determined that a northern connector should be a separate concept to discuss.

Dan went on to explain some of the concerns related to the 158 Strategic Highway Corridor concept. As this project will likely take years to be funded and planned, it is important to have a tool in place to secure public right-of-way along the final alignment as new development occurs. The county does not currently have a strategy for securing this.

One committee member discussed the appropriate alignment for an alternate route and discussed that not all roads need to be four lanes with a median, especially within a rural context.

DISCUSSION

Dan Porter requested input from the committee on the US Highway 158 Alternatives (2) presented to the committee.

- One member expressed the difficulty in making a choice between the alignments. A request was made to provide more information / analysis of the two choices to help members make a selection.
- Other members discussed the need to have a map that zoomed in on these two alternatives and provided minor and local street names to help orient.
- Another member questioned the cost effectiveness of developing a completely new road versus retrofitting the existing US 158. Generally, it is more cost effective to build new roads on greenfields than to obtain additional public right-of-way to widen a road through a developed area.
- One member noted that the alternatives have their issues to contend with: crossing wetlands, crossing railroad tracks, need for bridges.
- One member noted that the final preferred alignment should be put on the future land use map in the comprehensive plan.

3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Roger Waldon and Leigh Anne King delivered a presentation that touched on the following topics:

- Status Report on Project Progress
- Presentation of Draft Future Land Use Plan
- Presentation of Draft Plan Framework

(The full powerpoint presentation is included as an appendix to this meeting summary.)

Status Report on Project Progress

The comprehensive plan project is more than 2/3 of the way through, and the plan is scheduled to be delivered to the county commissioners in June 2012.

Presentation of Draft Future Land Use Plan

Roger Waldon presented an overview of the working draft of the Future Land Use plan. The general objectives of the future land use plan are:











- Provides overall pattern for future development in the county (where and what type)
- Sets framework for infrastructure improvements
- Provides guidance to decision-makers

Camden's future land use plan (working draft) was prepared using several objectives:

- Better align future land use with zoning
- Reflect existing land uses and environmental constraints
- Reflect a targeted development pattern that provides new housing choices and more commercial opportunities

This working draft version includes ten land use designations that are described in the Future Land Use Designations document included in the appendix of this report. The map is provided on the next page.

Draft Future Land Use Categories

 Environmental Preservation	 Village Center
 Rural Preservation	 Village Commercial
 Rural Residential	 Crossroads Commercial
 Village Residential	 Mixed-Use Employment
 Village Mixed-Use	 Marine Commercial

WORKING DRAFT

Great Dismal Swamp

South Mills Township

Courthouse Township

Shiloh Township

Pasquotank River
North River
Albermarle Sound



- Legend**
- Township Boundary
 - Core Village
- Draft Future Land Use Categories**
- Environmental Preservation
 - Rural Preservation
 - Rural Residential
 - Village Residential
 - Village Mixed-Use
 - Village Center
 - Village Commercial
 - Crossroads Commercial
 - Mixed-Use Employment
 - Marine Commercial



Future Land Use

CAMDEN
March 2022

DISCUSSION

- One member noted the need to place the 158 Alternate road alignment on the final comprehensive plan map.
- One member noted that the rural residential in the South Mills township seemed to include too much land and should be pulled back from the east.
- One member noted there is an opportunity to develop residential development in the South Mills township that would capture development from the Moyock area, but that this opportunity is dependent upon road access along Old Swamp road between US 17 and Currituck County.
- US 158 from US 343 to Belcross should provide more opportunities for commercial development. One idea is to have an overlay for village scale development that provides recommendations for specific design objectives that should be met without limiting the exact locations where development could occur. These objectives would discourage conventional strip commercial development and focus on village-scale commercial development that is designed to reflect the rural character of Camden County.
- One member suggested taking another look at the Highway Commercial zoning districts that apply along main roadways in Camden.
- One member asked if the impacts on land valuation would be assessed as part of the comprehensive plan process, and that the plan may have the potential to increase land values. Land valuation assessments are typically carried out by county governments for the purpose of determining property tax values. These are highly detailed assessments based on existing land use. While the future land use plan could potentially have an impact on land values, there are many other factors that also impact them – willingness of landowner to develop, existing zoning, access to public services, and other factors that can change at any time. The benefit of such an analysis would probably not justify the cost to prepare such an analysis. The plan can talk about the differences in housing values between Camden County and Hampton Roads area, and that providing more housing choices in Camden can open up a new market for households working in Hampton Roads to move to the county.
- One member noted that he liked the distinction between the village and crossroads commercial designation.
- Village areas should address recreation and other amenities to be included as part of new developments. It should address the current payment-in-lieu option for recreational facilities, particularly for the Shiloh area where new parks/facilities may not be as necessary or appropriate. This should be a requirement in more dense areas. However, public spaces are needed in all three townships, at varying scales.

Presentation of Draft Plan Framework

Leigh Anne King presented the working draft of the Plan Framework. This framework includes the essential elements of the plan: community vision, planning themes, planning goals, objectives, and

action strategies. This document is included as an appendix to this summary report. The committee was presented with an overview of the community vision, which received general approval.

The committee was then walked through an exercise to look at the objectives under each planning theme, to evaluate the priorities, and to identify any revisions that should be made. The seven planning themes include:

- Planning Our Future Land Use
- Preserving and Enhancing Community Character
- Building the Local Economy
- Expanding Tourism and Recreation
- Fostering Mobility, Accessibility, and Safety
- Conserving Environmental Resources
- Serving Current and Future Residents

DISCUSSION

Planning Our Future Land Use

- Priority:
 - Promote targeted development pattern

Preserving and Enhancing Community Character

- Priorities:
 - Promote village-style development
 - Recreational amenities
 - Recreation payment-in-lieu
 - Public spaces
 - Update open space requirements

Building the Local Economy

- Priorities:
 - Set economic development priority actions/support non-traditional forms of economic development (eco-tourism, agriculture, forestry, etc.)
 - Partnerships for infrastructure development
 - 21st century telecommunications (broadband)
- Concerns/Recommendations:
 - Merge objectives #1 and #3
 - Recreation and tourism should be a priority for economic development – need to provide additional amenities

Expanding Tourism and Recreation

- Priorities:
 - Connector trails and business development opportunities near Dismal Swamp State Park

- Supporting eco-tourism, especially in vicinity of Dismal Swamp and North River Gamelands
- Supporting recreation related businesses
- Concerns/Recommendations:
 - Army Corps of Engineers must approve development of all facilities along canal – will have an impact on development of marina, outfitters, and other related uses. Would like to have a formal plan for the location of a new boat ramp leading into canal.
 - Would like to connect Dismal Swamp Park via connector trail to employment areas and community services
 - Where is it most appropriate to have additional commercial development along the waterways? Many of the marinas with Albemarle/Pasquotank River access are full. May need more capacity for this use. Will also need to consider drainage issues. Could pose this question to the public at next public meeting.
 - Objective #4 addresses all other objectives
 - Two main opportunities for ecotourism: Dismal Swamp and North River Gamelands

Fostering Mobility, Accessibility, and Safety

- Priorities:
 - Better connectivity and accessibility within new developments, including bicycle accessibility

Conserving Environmental Resources

- Priorities:
 - Managing stormwater and drainage

Serving Current and Future Residents

- Priorities:
 - Public-private partnerships for utility construction
 - Formal policies for utility allocation
 - High quality public education
 - Recreational opportunities
- Comments/Recommendations:
 - Delete S. Camden Fire Station recommendation – addressed by Sawyers Fire Station

Leigh Anne King stated that an email would be sent to committee members giving them through April 20 to provide additional comment of the draft future land use map and draft plan framework.

Second Public Workshop

A second public workshop will be held in early May to present the draft plan framework and draft future land use plan map/designations. Attendees will be given an opportunity to review the information, and will be presented with an overview of the information, a keypad polling exercise to gauge priorities, and other opportunities to provide comment on the plan. The meeting date is set for May 8. An afternoon and evening session will be conducted, giving some flexibility for those that work to attend.

Working Draft

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use portion of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to decision-makers in Camden County regarding the overall pattern of development that should occur in the county and appropriate types of land uses and intensity of development that should occur in specific locations. The current adopted Future Land Use map and designations is included in the 2005 CAMA Advanced Core Plan. This draft Future Land Use map and designations is offered as an update to those documents.

The Future Land Use map and designations are used during development review to make recommendations and decisions regarding the appropriateness of different aspects of proposed developments. The Future Land Use map and designations provide guidance when making decisions about zoning, site planning, and subdivision approvals.

The intent is that this updated Future Land Use map and designations better reflect the current vision for the county. It provides a framework for targeted village-style development within the core village areas, and rural and environmental preservation in all other areas. Of considerable significance, is the infrastructure needed to support this new development. The pattern of development assumes that the extension of public infrastructure, particularly sanitary sewer service, would only occur within the core village areas of South Mills and Courthouse/Camden. This recommendation will limit the intensity of development in other areas – providing a framework for protecting rural character and managing public expenditures.

What follows is a description of each of the Future Land Use designations located on the draft map. Each designation includes the following information:

- * General description
- * Intent
- * Recommended policies
- * Appropriate specific uses

This information will be reviewed by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee at the April 3 meeting and comments will be taken the meeting and in subsequent weeks.

If you would like to provide a comment on the draft Future Land Use map and designations – please send to Leigh Anne King of Clarion Associates at laking@clarionassociates.com

Working Draft

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The draft Future Land Use map contains the following designations:

- * Environmental Preservation
- * Rural Preservation
- * Rural Residential
- * Village Residential
- * Village Mixed-Use
- * Village Center
- * Village Commercial
- * Crossroads Commercial
- * Mixed-Use Employment
- * Marine Commercial

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

Description

Contains environmentally sensitive lands, including the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, the Dismal Swamp State Park, the North River Gamelands Preserve, and other permanently protected areas.

Intent

These areas should be kept in a natural state. Federal, state, and local protections are in place for many parcels with this designation. Development of nature-based recreational uses are appropriate and should emphasize passive recreation and limit impervious surfaces of facilities and infrastructure.

Policies

- * Should remain in an undeveloped, natural state, except for the development of nature-based recreational uses.
- * Areas surrounding environmental preservation areas should consider impacts on these lands. Wooded or vegetated buffers around natural conservation lands are appropriate to reduce the impacts on these lands from noise, traffic, external lighting, and stormwater flows from off-site developments.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Open space
- * Recreational facilities and related infrastructure

RURAL PRESERVATION

Description

Contains very low density rural residential development, farms, forestry sites, existing mining sites, and environmentally sensitive lands.

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Intent

Rural preservation areas promote the continued use of working lands (farms, forestry, and limited existing mining) and protection of environmentally sensitive lands from more intense development. Development should only include very low density residential uses, up to a maximum of one dwelling unit per two acres. Appropriate zoning for rural preservation development includes the General Use and R 3-2 zoning districts.

Policies

- * Encroachment upon these lands by neighboring development could affect the operations of existing working lands enterprises. Areas surrounding rural preservation areas should consider impacts on these lands, particularly for agricultural operations. All efforts should be made to reduce such conflicts. Wooded or vegetated buffers are appropriate to reduce the impacts on these lands from noise, traffic, external lighting, and stormwater flows.
- * When developing in areas adjacent to established working lands enterprises, make a concerted effort to address the input of the working lands landowner during the development review process.
- * The extension of public utilities within rural preservation areas is not recommended.
- * To the extent possible, development should maintain a wooded corridor along roadways to maintain the rural aesthetic of the county.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Very low density residential uses (up to 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres)
- * Working lands (farms, forestry sites, existing mining operations)
- * Agricultural support uses
- * Open space and recreation
- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Description

Contains rural, low density single family residential development. Densities range from one dwelling unit per two acres to one dwelling unit per acre. Lands with this designation are located in South Mills east of the core village area, along the 158 corridor, south of 343 between the Courthouse/Camden and Shiloh core village areas, and along Sandy Hook Road.

Intent

These areas should primarily accommodate rural residential uses. Prime agricultural lands and other working lands are not included within this designation. Rural residential areas serve as a buffer between rural preservation areas and more intense development. Appropriate zoning for rural residential development includes the R 3-2, R 3-1, R-2, and R-1 zoning districts.

Working Draft

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within rural residential areas is not recommended.
- * To the extent possible, development should maintain a wooded corridor along roadways to maintain the rural aesthetic of the county.
- * Recreational facilities provided in new residential developments should be designed to provide maximum access to properties in the development and should include passive and active recreational facilities, with emphasis on providing walking and biking trails.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing residential developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Low density residential uses (up to 1 dwelling unit per acre)
- * Open space and recreation
- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL

Description

Consists of existing and new residential development opportunities within the South Mills township, including the Wharf's Landing development, and undeveloped lands south of Main Street in the core village area.

Intent

Village residential uses provide a more moderate scale of neighborhood development focusing on primarily single family detached development. This area could include attached residential uses, such as townhomes, as long as they are designed within the recommended density range. Housing density should not exceed three dwelling units per acre. Appropriate zoning for village residential development includes the Planned Unit Development, R-1 and R-2 districts.

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within village residential areas is appropriate.
- * Linkages should be made to provide vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access between residential developments and proximate commercial and recreational centers.
- * Recreational facilities provided in new residential developments should be designed to provide maximum access to properties in the development and should include passive and active recreational facilities, with emphasis on providing sidewalks and biking trails.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing residential developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality.

Working Draft

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Moderate density residential uses (up to 3 dwelling units per acre)
- * Open space and recreation
- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

VILLAGE MIXED USE

Description

This area includes new opportunities for moderate to higher density mixed-use, including residential, commercial, and recreational uses. It includes Camden Plantation, a proposed planned unit development north of Main Street in the South Mills core village area, development opportunities south of Country Club Road and south of US 158 in Courthouse/Camden, and a proposed planned unit development in Shiloh township north of One Mill and Riggs Roads.

Intent

Village Mixed-Use includes future areas for development of more dense residential neighborhoods that provide a diversity of housing types and housing options. Areas include single-family detached units, townhouses, duplexes, condominiums, apartments, senior housing, and other multi-family dwelling units. Housing densities should range from 3-8 dwelling units per acre. Development should fit the context of the most proximate core village area. Appropriate zoning for village mixed-use development includes the Planned Unit Development district.

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within village residential areas in South Mills and Courthouse/Camden is appropriate. The village mixed-use area located in Shiloh is more appropriately serviced using a small package plant than public sanitary sewer.
- * Linkages should be made to provide vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access between residential developments and proximate commercial and recreational centers.
- * Recreational facilities provided in new residential developments should be designed to provide maximum access to properties in the development and should include passive and active recreational facilities, with emphasis on providing sidewalks and biking trails.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing residential developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Moderate and higher density residential uses (up to 14 dwelling units per acre)
- * Neighborhood serving commercial uses (coffee shops, small restaurants, dry cleaners, etc.) and small scale office uses
- * Grocery or pharmacy

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- * Open space and recreation
- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

VILLAGE CENTER

Description

Contains areas with focused commercial and institutional development in the three core villages: Main Street in South Mills, the corner of US 158 and NC 343 in Courthouse/Camden, and Trotman Road and NC 343 in Shiloh.

Intent

The village center designation is intended to foster development that reinforces the core village areas in Camden County. These locations should be the “heart” of each township area and should provide opportunities for residents to gather, shop, recreate, and receive government services. (See Preserving and Enhancing Community Character Objective #2: Promote Village Style Development) for additional information on the intent of each core village area.) The village center may also offer opportunities for live/work units – small residences located within non-residential buildings providing residence to proprietors and others wishing to live close to non-residential amenities. Appropriate zoning for village center development includes the Planned Unit Development district.

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within village center areas is appropriate. The village center area located in Shiloh is more appropriately serviced using a small package plant than public sanitary sewer.
- * Non-residential development in these areas should focus on providing service to residents of the township and to visiting tourists. These are not appropriate locations for larger-scale, regional retail establishments.
- * Village centers should provide an appropriate pedestrian experience. These areas should provide pedestrian and bicycle amenities to residents and tourists, including public bicycle parking facilities, ample sidewalks with appropriate lighting, and wayfinding signage to orient visitors to points of interests.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality. Detention ponds and swales should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing, and to serve as landscaped features and/or public water features.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Village scale commercial retail, restaurants, and personal service establishments (salons, dry cleaners)
- * Small professional offices (accountant, attorney, real estate, insurance, etc.)

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- * Moderate and higher density residential uses in live-work units or higher density residential developments (up to 14 dwelling units per acre)
- * Grocery or pharmacy
- * Open space and recreation
- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

VILLAGE COMMERCIAL

Description

Contains the area planned for commercial development in Wharf's Landing on US 17, and a commercial area at the corner of Belcross and US 158.

Intent

These areas focus on retail and commercial uses that serve proximate residential neighborhoods. They are distinct from the village center designation in that they do not serve as the "heart" of the community and do not provide housing, but instead provide access to needed goods and services. Retail areas can have a range of characteristics depending on the township they service. In general, these should provide convenience shopping and include restaurants and smaller specialty retailers. Village commercial is intended to serve a more local and community need, but may include some regional-scale establishments designed to fit within a village context.

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within village commercial areas is appropriate.
- * Non-residential development in these areas should focus on providing service to residents of the township and to visiting tourists. Regional retail establishments are also appropriate if they are designed in a manner that upholds the rural character and village-style design aesthetic.
- * Village commercial areas should be designed in a master planned fashion that consolidates driveway access from major roadways, provides shared parking for establishments, and provides safe pedestrian and bicycle access between parking areas and commercial establishments, and provides access to neighboring developments.
- * To the extent possible, developments should maintain a wooded corridor along major roadways to maintain the rural aesthetic of the county.
- * Off-premise signage height should be limited to reflect the rural character while also providing adequate advertising opportunities for establishments.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality. Detention ponds and swales should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing, and to serve as landscaped features and/or public water features.

Working Draft

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Village scale commercial retail, restaurants, and personal service establishments
- * Professional offices
- * Grocery or pharmacy
- * Appropriately designed (i.e., village scale) regional retail establishments
- * Open space and recreation
- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

CROSSROADS COMMERCIAL

Description

This designation includes a small cluster of commercial development in the Shiloh township on Sandy Hook Road south of Stanley Lane.

Intent

Crossroads commercial is intended to provide commercial uses that serve proximate rural residences. Crossroads commercial is not typically designed in a master planned fashion, but as singular smaller shops and stores that provide basic goods and services.

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within crossroads commercial areas is not appropriate.
- * Non-residential development in these areas should focus on providing service to residents of the township and to visiting tourists. They should be small scale and provide basic goods and services – convenience shopping for the Shiloh township.
- * Crossroads commercial development primarily serves vehicular traffic. Small paths may be designed to connect to adjacent corridor commercial developments to serve bicyclists and pedestrians, or customers wishing to walk between stores.
- * To the extent possible, developments should maintain a wooded corridor along major roadways to maintain the rural aesthetic of the county.
- * Off-premise signage height should be limited to reflect the rural character while also providing adequate advertising opportunities for establishments.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Small, rural scale commercial retail, restaurants, and personal service establishments, such as a general store, non-drive through restaurant, hair salon, or gas station
- * Open space and recreation

Working Draft

- * Public/institutional uses (schools, places of worship, fire stations, other government facilities)

MIXED-USE EMPLOYMENT

Description

Mixed-use employment areas are located primarily along the US 17 corridor north of South Mills core village area and including the new Eco-Industrial Park, near the Virginia border, and the area including Camden Business Park and surrounding areas on US 158 in Courthouse/Camden township.

Intent

These areas include a wide range of business, light industrial, office, research and development, and related ancillary uses, such as restaurants and small-scale retail and convenience shopping. They generally take on the appearance of an office development, yet with warehousing capabilities. Mixed-Use Employment centers may take the form of a “campus” in the integration and coordination of uses and quality and character of the development. These areas are prime locations with good access to major road networks and an employment base and should be reserved for high-return employment generating uses such as office buildings or light manufacturing or warehousing operations. Heavy or light industrial uses are appropriate zoning designations for this development.

Policies

- * The extension of public utilities within mixed-use employment areas is appropriate.
- * As feasible, mixed-use employment areas should be designed in a master planned fashion that consolidates driveway access from major roadways, provides shared parking for establishments, and provides safe pedestrian access between parking areas and employment uses.
- * To the extent possible, developments should maintain a wooded corridor along major roadways to maintain the rural aesthetic of the county.
- * Off-premise signage height should be limited to reflect the rural character and provide easy orientation to employment destinations.
- * Stormwater management best practices should be used when designing developments to minimize flows and maintain water quality. Detention ponds and swales should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing, and to serve as landscaped features and/or public water features.

Appropriate Specific Uses

- * Business parks / research and development offices
- * Light industrial
- * Heavy industrial
- * Employment and locally serving retail establishments, such as convenience restaurants



Camden County

Draft Plan Framework Report

March 2012

Prepared by:

C L A R I O N

with



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A Note About Current Policies in the CAMA Plan

Many policies and actions that are listed in the current Camden County CAMA plan are still relevant today. Several of these policies support ongoing federal, state, and local laws, regulations and participating agencies that play a role in development decision-making. These policies are carried forward here by reference to the CAMA plan, and will be included in an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a more strategic set of goals, policies, and actions for the future, while also carrying forward these critical policies that affect local day-to-day decision making.



PLAN FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth report of the Camden County 2035 Comprehensive Plan process. The Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity for the Camden County community, as a whole, to create a common vision for the future by identifying community concerns and aspirations and creating an action plan to achieve the vision.

The comprehensive planning process includes three main phases of work:

1. Identifying Planning Influences and Opportunities
2. Developing a Community Vision
3. Constructing a Policy Framework and Implementation Plan

Phases 1 and 2 were initiated in 2011 and two reports document outcomes of those efforts: *Camden County Planning Influences and Opportunities Report* and the *Envision Camden County Summary Workshop Report*. Development of alternative development scenarios, discussed in the *Development Capacity and Alternative Development Scenarios Summary Report*, was the first step of Phase 3. This report, *Camden County Draft Plan Framework*, is the second step of Phase 3. All of these reports are available on the County's website (www.camdencountync.gov).

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to synthesize all of the community and stakeholder input, trend analysis, existing conditions, and feedback on alternative development scenarios that has been gathered over the last nine months into a formal plan framework.

What is the Plan Framework?

The plan framework consists of the essential elements of the plan that will guide future decision-making by the county. **The plan framework includes the county's vision statement, goals and objectives, and specific action strategies that are organized by planning themes.** The draft plan framework provided in this report organizes the goals, objectives, and action strategies using seven key planning themes. These are themes that have risen to the top during community discussions, and represent the key focus areas for plan implementation. The seven themes are:

- * Planning Our Future Land Use
- * Preserving and Enhancing Community Character
- * Building the Local Economy
- * Expanding Tourism and Recreation
- * Fostering Mobility, Accessibility, and Safety
- * Conserving Environmental Resources
- * Serving Current and Future Residents

As you read through this report, you will notice that many of the objectives and action strategies use passive language, such as “consider” and “encourage” when describing specific recommendations. Use of this passive language identifies specific recommendations that the Steering Committee has not yet discussed. We will focus our attention on these during the upcoming April 3 Steering Committee meeting. Please note that the Future Land Use Plan map and land use categories will be provided at the Steering Committee meeting.

Please review this report and note any comments on the enclosed material. Also, please identify the top 10 objectives/action strategies that you feel should be the highest priorities for the county. Your comments can be provided at the April 3 meeting or please feel free to send them to Leigh Anne King with Clarion Associates at laking@clarionassociates.com

DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The community vision statement is the comprehensive, overarching statement of the desired future of the county. The vision is the ultimate set of ideals to which the county should aspire.

DRAFT COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

Camden County will realize its goal to be a community with “new energy and a new vision” by embracing and capitalizing on its assets – abundant natural resources, a unique rural setting, and a high quality workforce and educational system. Emphasis will be placed on providing a good quality of life for residents in a manner that is fiscally efficient and that preserves rural community assets.

New development will be focused within targeted core areas to breathe new life into established county villages and to efficiently use existing and planned infrastructure and public resources. New housing choices will be made available to serve families, young professionals, and retirees. Rural areas will maintain prominence in the county, and will continue to serve agricultural and forestry production and low density residential development.

New employment development will broaden the county’s tax base and will be developed within strategic locations to maximize use of public infrastructure. Commercial and employment development will provide new goods and services and valuable employment opportunities to established residents. New industries will be low impact and will be designed to protect critical natural resources. The county will offer opportunities for residents and visitors to explore the natural wonder of Camden County by providing new hospitality and recreational amenities.

DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STRATEGIES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STRATEGIES

The plan framework consists of a vision statement that is further articulated through goals, objectives, and action strategies. These elements serve as a hierarchy, providing guidance at different levels.

Goals are defined as a desired end-state or target. They relate to the vision statement and focus on a specific theme of the plan. A goal provides particular guidance for where the county should be in the future, and sets the tone for individual objectives for each planning theme.

Objectives are a recommended course of action the county or its designated agency should undertake in pursuit of a specific goal and the community vision. An objective provides focused and achievable guidance on specific topics under the planning themes.

Action strategies provide specific tasks to implement objectives. These action strategies are the basis for development of the implementation component of the plan.

PLANNING OUR FUTURE LAND USE

GOAL

Camden County's land use pattern will be primarily rural in character with high quality and economically productive development in targeted locations in the core village areas and along main road corridors that are served by or planned for utilities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Manage Future Growth

Camden County will continue to comply with state Coastal Management regulations and local policy direction by managing future growth in the county for the purpose of preserving natural and cultural resources, maintaining the rural character of the county, and to ensure efficient provision of public facilities and services.

Action Strategies

- * **Use Smart Growth Scorecard** - Continue to use the Smart Growth scorecard developed for Camden County to evaluate development proposals
- * **Reduce Environmental Impacts** - Continue to comply with NC Division of Coastal Management policies and regulations to protect environmentally sensitive areas, to reduce impacts of developing in the floodplain, and to address hazard mitigation

- * **Discourage Rezoning of Low Suitability Lands** - Continue to discourage rezoning of land to a higher intensity use that is designated as low or least suitable for development
- * **Evaluate Need to Update CAMA Plan** - Evaluate the need to update the CAMA Land Use Plan to reflect the vision, goals, and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan

2. Promote Targeted Development Pattern

Camden County will work with developers to encourage new residential and non-residential development in a manner that is consistent with the county's Future Land Use Plan. This approach will include the flexibility to consider and explore new opportunities that arise in the future that were not part of discussions when the Future Land Use plan was developed.

Action Strategies

- * **Promote Development through Rezoning** - Promote targeted development, as identified by the Future Land Use Plan map, through appropriate rezoning and development approvals
- * **Evaluate Impacts of Development Outside Targeted Areas** - Consider the effect on the preferred targeted development pattern when evaluating new development proposals submitted for areas outside targeted development areas; incorporate this evaluation as part of the development review process
- * **Support Implementation of the Camden County / US 17 Corridor Master Plan** – Charting a course for attracting and fostering new business development, Camden County will support the implementation of the US 17 Corridor Master Plan in accordance with the objectives and action strategies set out in the Comprehensive Plan
- * **Develop a Master Plan for 158 Corridor** - Pursue development of a master plan for the US 158 Corridor; this plan should identify particular areas for development and densities and development models that are appropriate given site conditions, existing and planned infrastructure, access to road network, environmental conditions, and development interests; the plan should address both the current 158 corridor and the preferred 158 Alternative being planned by NC DOTs as part of its Strategic Highway Corridor initiative
- * **Maintain Rural Scale Zoning** - Maintain the current very low and low density county zoning to protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas for lands outside of the targeted development areas
- * **Provide Public Water and Sewer in Targeted Development Areas** - Support the extension of public water and wastewater service within targeted development areas and discourage extension of these services outside of these areas

3. Provide New Housing Choices

Camden County will expand its housing stock by providing the opportunity to develop a variety of housing choices for current and future residents: starter housing for young professionals and new

families, housing for established families, retirement housing for retirees and empty nesters, and managed care housing for aging seniors.

Action Strategies

- * **Encourage Development of Accessory Apartments** - Encourage the development of by-right accessory dwelling apartments on single-family lots to provide additional housing options
- * **New Zoning for Moderate and Higher Density Housing** - Consider adopting new zoning districts to allow for moderate and higher density residential development within the core village areas as identified on the Future Land Use Plan map, or encourage the use of the Planned Unit Development zoning district for developments proposing higher density development
- * **New Design Standards for Higher Density Housing** - If the county pursues development of new zoning districts to permit higher density housing, consider developing new development standards for single-family attached and multi-family housing that addresses the siting of buildings, parking, landscaping and buffering between adjacent uses and road frontages, on-site circulation, height and building massing, and exterior lighting

4. Ensure that New Development Has a Positive Impact on County Budget

Camden County will evaluate development proposals for their impact on future county budgets, both for county operations and capital improvements to ensure that new development will not have a deleterious effect on fiscal resources.

Action Strategies

- * **Promote Development Where Public Infrastructure Exists or Is Planned** - Promote a targeted development pattern that focuses development in areas where public infrastructure and facilities are existing or planned, and away from areas where new systems would be needed to service new development
- * **Develop Fiscal Impact Model for New Developments** - Consider developing a fiscal impact model to be used to evaluate new development proposals; the model should assess impacts on public water and sewer, public education, public safety (fire, ems, and sheriff), and general government
- * **Consider Comprehensive Plan Goals when Drafting CIP** - Consider the goals of the Comprehensive Plan when updating the county's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- * **Coordinate Development and Infrastructure Planning** - Given the finite nature of water and wastewater capacity, coordinate development approvals with local utilities to ensure adequate service capacity can be provided to proposed developments, and that long-term land use and infrastructure planning goals are met

5. *Reduce Development Impacts on Natural Environment and Working Lands*

Camden County will minimize the impacts of new development on environmentally sensitive areas, in particular the Areas of Environmental Concern, and on active agriculture and forestry working lands.

Action Strategies

- * See section on “Conserving Environmental Resources”

PRESERVING AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY CHARACTER

GOAL

Camden County will preserve and enhance its pastoral character by ensuring that new development within targeted development areas is designed to fit the context of the core village areas in the manner of an American rural village. Development in areas outside of targeted development locations will continue to be developed at a rural scale and provide opportunities for low and very density residential development, small-scale rural crossroads commercial development, and agricultural and forestry operations.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain Rural Character

To ensure the pastoral qualities and experience of Camden County, the county will maintain rural character by ensuring that new development is designed to uphold certain rural characteristics.

Action Strategies

- * **Rural Roadway Corridor Overlay District** - Consider developing an overlay district to apply new standards for developments that occur along main roadways in the county, such as US 17, US 158, NC 343, NC 34, etc.; new standards could address roadway buffers to screen development from views along road corridors, protection of tree stands, glare and illumination impacts of exterior lighting on the roadway and adjacent properties, stormwater management, and commercial signage
- * **Design Guidelines for Rural Development** - Consider development of Rural Design Guidelines to provide guidance to developers on the characteristics that the county would like to see in new developments; topics to be addressed could include street network and block formation, recommendations for open spaces and recreational amenities (local parks, bike paths, walking paths), how new developments are sited within the existing development context, building height, and preferred land uses; these guidelines would not regulate new development but would instead assist developers with understanding preferred design features for new development
- * **Evaluate Impacts on Dismal Swamp State Park** - When evaluating development proposals within the vicinity of the Dismal Swamp State Park, consider the impacts on the park and

discourage incompatible land uses that would negatively affect park operations and the visitor experience; conflicts to evaluate could include noise, glare and lighting, reducing wooded buffers around the park, and signage

2. Promote Village Style Development

Camden County will foster the development and redevelopment of its core township areas (South Mills, Camden, and Shiloh) in the form of an American rural village. The design of each township core will be unique to the existing development framework and function of the area.

South Mills Village Core Action Strategies

The South Mills Core Village Area will be redeveloped to serve as the county’s “main street” or downtown village area that will be surrounded by parks, public spaces, and residential neighborhoods. The following action strategies work to achieve this vision for South Mills:

- ❖ **Adoption of South Mills Small Area Plan** - Camden County should provide a formal opportunity for public review of the South Mills Small Area Plan and adopt the final plan
- ❖ **New Developments Will Fit Existing Context** - To ensure that new developments fit within the context of existing development in South Mills, new developments should preserve and respect existing village patterns such as the street network and block length and width in South Mills
- ❖ **Promote Infill and Redevelopment** - Continue to encourage redevelopment of aging structures and infill development on undeveloped lots in South Mills; new infill and redevelopment should fit the context of the surrounding neighborhood
- ❖ **Advertise Housing Rehabilitation Assistance** - Property owners should be made aware of housing rehabilitation assistance that the county can provide to replace or improve structures, assist with water connection fees, and assist with plumbing
- ❖ **Create Plan to Improve Main Street Streetscape** - Develop a formal capital improvement plan to improve the South Mills main street streetscape; the plan could address the following improvements: obtaining public right-of-way necessary to make improvements, wayfinding signage, street lights, paving, sidewalks, and addressing drainage issues
- ❖ **Foster New Commercial Development on Main Street** - Foster the development of new retail and restaurant establishments on Main Street in South Mills through focused economic development efforts; development opportunities could serve tourists and residents and could include a bed and breakfast, local retailers, restaurants, and recreation oriented businesses serving bicyclists and boaters (i.e., outfitters)
- ❖ **Extend South Mills Trail to Core Area** - Extend the South Mills trail into the core village area and connect to the Dismal Swamp Canal and a potential marina
- ❖ **Design Guidelines for South Mills Village Development** - Consider development of Village Style Design Guidelines for South Mills to provide guidance to developers on the characteristics that the county would like to see in new developments; topics to be addressed

could include street network and block formation, recommendations for public spaces, how new developments are sited within the existing development context, building height, and preferred land uses; these guidelines would not regulate new development but would instead assist developers with understanding preferred design features for new development

Camden Village Core Action Strategies

The Camden Core Village Area will be redeveloped to serve as the commercial and governmental “heart” of the community. The US 158 Corridor will be the focus for new mixed use, higher density development in targeted locations. The following action strategies work to achieve this vision for Camden:

- * **Pursue Development of a Master Plan for the US 158 Corridor** - This plan should identify particular areas for development and densities and development models that are appropriate given site conditions, existing and planned infrastructure, access to road network, environmental conditions, and development interests; the plan should address both the current 158 corridor and the preferred 158 Alternative being planned by NC DOTs as part of its Strategic Highway Corridor initiative
- * **Establish a Plan to Provide Needed Public Sewer Service on US 158** – The county should work with the South Camden Water and Sewer District to develop a formal plan for providing sanitary sewer service to properties along US 158, particularly in targeted development areas as denoted on the Future Land Use map

Shiloh Village Core Action Strategies

The Shiloh Core Village Area will continue to be developed as the southern crossroads community in Camden. It will continue to serve as a rural hub for small scale commercial services to serve neighboring residences. Development should continue to be developed at a scale that does not require public wastewater service.

3. Provide Recreational Opportunities within New Developments

Per the county’s zoning ordinance, new residential or mixed use developments should include recreational amenities. These standards should be improved to require appropriate bicycle and walking paths and link to adjacent pathways as possible.

Action Strategies

- * **New Developments to Include Open Space and Recreational Facilities** - Continue to require open space and recreational facilities as part of residential and mixed use developments
- * **Update County Development Standards to Require Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths as Part of New Residential Development** - Update the county’s Unified Development Ordinance to

require the development of bicycle and walking paths as a part of residential and mixed use developments of a certain size (20 or more units)

4. Protect Historic and Cultural Community Assets

Camden County will work to protect historic and cultural community assets through identification of these assets during the development review process.

Action Strategies

- * **Identify Historic and Cultural Assets and Plan for Their Protection** - Identify historical sites and structures during the development review process and develop a requirement to protect / conserve special places, as warranted and feasible
- * **Create a Comprehensive Map of Historic Sites and Structures** - As sites and structure are identified, document these locations using the county's GIS mapping software to create a comprehensive listing and map of historic sites and structures in Camden County
- * **Develop Historic Preservation Society for South Mills** - Consider developing an historic preservation society for South Mills to assist in preservation efforts

BUILDING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

GOAL

Camden County will have a diverse and balanced economy that provides new business opportunities to employ citizens and provide goods and services, and that will generate new revenues to fund high-quality government facilities and services.

OBJECTIVES

1. Priorities for Economic Development Efforts

Camden County's economic development efforts shall focus on the following:

- * Business recruitment for Eco Industrial Park and Camden Business Park
- * Recruiting a grocery provider or large scale retailer to the county
- * Recruiting retail and restaurant development to South Mills and Camden core areas
- * Work with developers of Camden Plantation, Town Center, and Wharf's Landing to foster the successful development of these projects
- * The county will maintain flexibility when determining priorities as new development and funding opportunities arise

Action Strategies

- * **Identify Employment Opportunities for Local Workforce** - Identify opportunities to provide new employment that aligns with the job skills of local residents
- * **Identify Targeted Business Prospects** - Created a targeted list of business prospects for recruitment (industries and businesses within those industries)
- * **Develop County Marketing Materials** - Create economic development marketing materials for Camden County and targeted development sites

2. Support Targeted Development

Camden County will support economic development within targeted development areas through future land use planning, the provision of public infrastructure, and development incentives.

Action Strategies

- * **Provide Development Incentives** - Consider providing incentives for new commercial and mixed use developments located in targeted development areas; incentives could include a fast track permitting process, flexibility on development standards (parking, landscaping, etc.), potential for bonus density when meeting specific requirements, or waiving water/sewer tap on fees
- * **Work with Property Owners to Provide Public Sewer Service in South Mills** - Work with property owners along Main Street in South Mills to encourage tapping onto public sewer service, promoting redevelopment and upgrades to existing facilities

3. Support Non-Traditional Forms of Economic Development

Camden County economic development efforts will include non-traditional industries, many of which do not require significant infrastructure improvements to be able to generate economic activity. These industries include eco-tourism, moderate scale commercial fishing and processing, wind turbine farms, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and local farmers markets.

- * **Include Non-Traditional Industries in Marketing Materials** – New economic development marketing materials should include a focus on non-traditional industries and the fertile ground that Camden County provides for business development in these sectors

4. Foster Partnerships to Provide Needed Infrastructure for New Development

Camden County will work with developers to negotiate public-private partnerships to provide needed infrastructure for new development, reducing public expenditures on capital improvements and speeding the development process by providing needed infrastructure.

Action Strategies

- * **Secure Funding for Infrastructure Improvements** - Work with developers to secure funding for needed infrastructure improvements within targeted development areas as necessary to foster new development; such opportunities exist through the North Carolina Rural Center, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the US Economic Development Assistance program, and other federal, state, and private organizations

5. Work to Provide 21st Century Telecommunications Service

Camden County shall work to establish broadband telecommunication service in the county.

Action Strategies

- * **Secure Funding for Infrastructure Improvements** - Work with telecommunication providers to come up with a strategy for bringing high speed broadband service to Camden County

6. Partner with Regional Economic Development Agencies

Support and partner with state and regional economic development agencies, such as the Northeastern North Carolina Economic Development Commission.

Action Strategies

- * **Foster Ongoing Relationships with Partner Agencies and Organizations** – Camden County should develop ongoing relationships with partner organizations to capitalize on regional marketing opportunities and to market sites and attractions within the regional marketplace
- * **Educate Regional and State Partners on Available Development Sites** – Educate regional and state economic development partners on development opportunity sites in Camden County

EXPANDING TOURISM AND RECREATION

GOAL

Camden County will become a destination for outdoor and recreational enthusiasts and will offer recreational amenities and visitor services to support a new tourism economy.

OBJECTIVES

1. Capitalize on Natural Assets by Supporting Eco-Tourism and Related Efforts

Camden County will work to identify and support development of new eco-tourism facilities and programs in the county, including environmental education, outdoor adventure, water activities, hunting and fishing, historic education, special events, sports and tournaments.

Action Strategies

- * **Develop Official Blueways on County Waters** - Work with partners to develop official “blueways” along specific sections of surrounding rivers and to provide access/launch points, and construct camping platforms
- * **Support Development of Additional Recreational and Educational Amenities at Dismal Swamp State Park** - Encourage development of a network of trails within the new campground and development of interpretive and educational signage or electronic media in Dismal Swamp State Park to educate visitors about natural features or historic events
- * **Protect Rural Resources and Natural Features** - Foster a targeted development pattern to protect the county’s rural character and provide new opportunities for visitors to recreate and enjoy the natural landscape of the county

2. Provide Additional Access to Public Rivers to All Members of the Community

Camden County will work to provide additional public access points to rivers for all residents of the county, including disabled persons.

Action Strategies

- * **Provide Additional Public Access to Beaches, Creeks, and Rivers** - Working with the Army Corps of Engineers and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the county will identify opportunities for additional public access points to beaches and public trust waters and develop a plan to provide access; access points should be ADA compliant

3. Support Development of Commercial Outfitters and Recreation Supporting Businesses

Camden County will work to foster development of local commercial outfitters within the county.

Action Strategies

- * **Provide Dismal Swamp Canal Access to Outfitters** - Work with Army Corps of Engineers and the NC Department of Transportation to provide Dismal Swamp canal access to commercial outfitters
- * **Evaluate Development Ordinance to Ensure Outfitters Permitted By-Right** - Evaluate the county’s unified development ordinance standards to ensure that local outfitters are permitted by-right in appropriate areas near river access points

4. Foster the Establishment of South Mills as the Gateway to the Camden County Backcountry

Camden County will work through its tourism and economic development departments to foster the establishment of South Mills as the gateway to the Camden County backcountry.

Action Strategies

- * **Evaluate Opportunities for Development of Local Marina** - Per the South Mills Small Area Plan, work with local land owners and the Dismal Swamp State Park to evaluate the opportunities to construct a marina in South Mills
- * **Support Heritage Tourism** - Support heritage tourism in South Mills through development of interpretive and wayfinding signage throughout the County, with a focus on South Mills

5. Provide Additional Recreation Facilities for Community Residents

Camden County will work to secure funding to plan for, design, and construct additional recreational facilities for community residents.

Action Strategies:

- * **Plan for New Recreation and Community Center** - Develop a plan and secure funding to construct a new recreation and community center to serve all county residents; appropriate locations for this facility include the South Mills and Camden core village areas
- * **Plan for New South Mills Community Park** - Develop a plan and secure funding for construction of a community park in South Mills to include ballfields, playground, picnic shelter, and nature trails
- * **Plan for New Shiloh Community Park** - Develop a plan and secure funding for construction of a community park in Shiloh to include ballfields, playground, picnic shelter, and nature trails

6. Support Development of the Dismal Swamp Connector Trail

Camden County will support development of the Dismal Swamp Connector Trail and extension of this trail to additional areas of the county.

Action Strategies

- * **Evaluate New Opportunities to Expand Dismal Swamp Connector Trail** - As new developments are designed near the Dismal Swamp State Park, identify opportunities to tie in new bicycle and pedestrian trails to the planned Dismal Swamp Connector Trail

7. Partner with Regional Agencies to Further Local Marketing of Eco-Tourism and Recreational Offerings in Camden County

Camden County will work with the North Carolina Division of Travel and Tourism and regional tourism entities to further local marketing efforts focused on eco-tourism and recreational offerings in the county.

Action Strategies

- * **Identify Potential Regional Eco-Tourism/Recreation Marketing Partners** - Identify regional entities for possible partnership opportunities to further market Camden County eco-tourism and recreational amenities and cultivate relationships

- * **Make Marketing Materials More Prominent on County Website** - Provide better visibility of Camden County brochure and other marketing materials on the county website

FOSTERING MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND SAFETY

GOAL

Camden County will have a transportation system that is coordinated with land use patterns, and that provides an acceptable level-of-service to support economic development and a high quality of life.

OBJECTIVES

1. Support the Development and Implementation of the Camden County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The County should continue to work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on development, adoption, and implementation of the County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. In particular, the county should continue to investigate alternatives for improved east-west connections through the County to facilitate movement through the County to destinations outside the county and to generally reduce potential congestion and improve roadway safety.

Action Strategies

- * **Place Priority Projects on the County's TIP** - Identify the preferred northern east-west connector and the preferred US 158 Alternate route, and other projects identified in the CTP and place these projects on the county's Transportation Improvement Program
- * **Evaluate Opportunities to Preserve Public Right-of-Way for New Connectors** – Identify local tools for preserving public right-of-way within identified connector routes to ensure successful future development of roads; when finalized, place the corridor alignments for the two connectors on the Camden County Future Land Use map

2. Create Better Connectivity and Accessibility within New Developments

As new development occurs, the county should work with developers and property owners to create connections to the development site and within the site that are efficient and safe. Access to main roadways should be limited to reduce conflicts associated with vehicular turning movements.

Action Strategies

- * **Development of Access and Circulation Standards** - Consider development of access and circulation standards for new commercial and mixed use developments

3. Include Bicycle Amenities within New Developments

Recreational bicycling opportunities should continue to be developed within the county to promote healthy lifestyles. New developments and areas of redevelopment should provide basic bicycle

amenities, such as bicycle parking, and marked routes or designated bicycle lanes to accommodate bicyclists.

4. Work to Provide Adequate Maintenance of Roads

As development occurs over time, work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization to support continued maintenance of roads. This includes addressing roads that serve both commuter traffic and agricultural operations.

5. Work with Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization to Evaluate Long-Term Transit Opportunities

Consider working with HRTPO to develop express bus routes along US 17 or vanpool programs to give Camden County residents options for getting to places of work in Virginia.

CONSERVING ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND WORKING LANDS

GOAL

Camden County will preserve and protect natural resources and working lands for the maintenance of natural systems, to continue to provide viable opportunities for agricultural and forestry operations, to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to commune with nature, and to provide new economic development opportunities related to eco-tourism and outdoor recreation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Manage Land Use Patterns to Protect Environmental Resources and Working Lands

Camden County will manage land development and land use patterns to ensure protection of critical environmental lands and active agricultural and forestry lands.

Action Strategies

- * **Continue to Limit Development in Environmentally Sensitive Areas** - Continue to limit development in environmentally sensitive areas to large lot, low-density residential, agricultural, forestry, and open space uses; discourage rezonings to higher intensity uses for areas designated as low or least suitable for development
- * **Discourage Provision of Water and Sewer Infrastructure in Least Suitable Areas** – Following the guidance of the Future Land Use Plan map, discourage local utilities from extending public water and sewer service to lands designated as least suitable areas for development
- * **Consider Making Conservation Subdivisions a Requirement in the General Use Zoning District** – To protect environmentally significant lands and to discourage fragmentation of natural habitats and natural systems, consider making the current conservation subdivision option mandatory in the General Use zoning district; this requirement would not reduce development yields but would cluster developments and protect larger swaths of open space

2. *Protect Critical Resources*

Camden County will evaluate opportunities to strengthen existing critical resource policies and regulations to ensure that areas of environmental concern are protected as new development occurs in the future.

Action Strategies

- * **Consider Updating Open Space Provisions** - Consider updating open space provisions in the Unified Development Ordinance to increase the required percentage of open space protected within new developments; encourage the use of conservation subdivisions to protect critical resources whenever possible
- * **Consider Increasing Water Quality Standards** – Consider establishing performance standards for water quality protection that are more stringent than those required by Coastal Stormwater Rules for SC and C-Swamp waters
- * **Consider Establishing a Land Banking Fund for the Acquisition of Critical Lands** – Consider establishing a land banking fund for the acquisition of critical lands that are not suitable for development and for which protection of the upmost importance for health and human safety and for the integrity of natural systems

3. *Protect Agricultural and Forestry Resources*

Camden County will partner with the Camden County Farm Bureau, North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, the North Carolina Forestry Association, and other partners to protect agricultural and forestry resources.

Action Strategies

- * **Continue Using Best Management Practices** – Continue to encourage agricultural and forestry industries to manage stormwater runoff on working lands by implementing the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s *Agricultural Best Management Practices* and the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources NC Div. of Forest Resources *Forestry Best Management Practices*; work with partners to update and implement best management practices
- * **Consider Adopting New Development Standards for Rural Preservation Areas** - To protect existing farmlands from encroachment by new development, consider adopting new development standards for rural preservation areas; standards to consider include vegetated or wooded buffers between development and active working lands, acquiring public easements for stormwater drainage areas, and locations for well taps
- * **Consider Establishment of Voluntary Agricultural Districts** – To provide additional protection to agricultural operations from encroachment by new development, consider working with agricultural partners to establish voluntary agricultural districts [*can include a sidebar in the plan to explain further what this entails and the benefits of a VADs*]
- * **Consider Development of a Farmland Preservation Plan** – To ensure a local food source over time and to ensure the viability of agricultural operations over time, consider working with agricultural partners to develop a local Farmland Preservation Plan

4. Enhance Stormwater Management

Camden County will improve stormwater (drainage) management to ensure that working lands and residents have high water quality for years to come, and that working lands have adequate irrigation opportunities for farming and forestry operations.

Action Strategies

- * **Acquire Public Easements on Drainage Areas in New Developments** – Set new requirements for the acquisition of public easements on drainage areas in new developments to allow for regular maintenance of drainage swales and allow water to properly flow to adjacent properties
- * **Consider New Methods for Managing Stormwater Near Working Lands** - Seek new methods for managing stormwater on developments located near working lands to ensure the viability and integrity of working lands
- * See Stormwater Objectives in the “Serving Current and Future Residents” Section (page 18).

6. Monitor Progress on Climate Change Research and Policy Development

Camden County will monitor progress on climate change research and policy development, both at the state and nationally, to identify local tools and policies that can help address long-term climate change impacts.

- * **Monitor Progress of CAMA’s Sea Level Rise Policy** - Continue to stay abreast of North Carolina Division of Coastal Management’s Sea Level Rise Policy and requirements for local education on this topic
- * **Consider Establishment of New Design Standards for Development in Hazardous Areas** – Consider establishing new design standards for development in high hazard areas to ensure that structures withstand high winds, storm surges, flooding, and other natural disasters prone to the area
- * **Consider Development of a Climate Adaptation Plan** – Going beyond hazard mitigation plans, the county should consider development of a Climate Adaptation Plan to address long-term planning needs associated with adaptation to future climate change impacts

SERVING CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS

GOAL

Camden County will provide infrastructure and community facilities in a fiscally responsible manner that is consistent with the proposed future land use map, economic development opportunities, and local demand for services.

PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER OBJECTIVES

1. Promote Land Use Patterns that Efficiently Use Public Water and Sewer Services

Camden County will promote a land development pattern that efficiently uses existing and planned public water and sewer services and that capitalizes on economic development opportunities.

Action Strategies

- * **Promote a Land Use Pattern that Utilizes Centralized Utility Systems** - Promote and facilitate forms of development that will allow for more centralized and environmentally effective systems that will serve as the backbone for future growth
- * **Consider Both Economic Opportunities and the Preferred Land Use Pattern** – Balance the need to assess economic development opportunities when planning for water and sewer capital improvements with the land use pattern outlined in the Future Land Use plan
- * **Continue to Ensure Concurrency of Development and Public Facilities** - Use the County’s Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance to manage growth and ensure that needed infrastructure will be made available to service new development
- * **Consider Amending County Policy on Private Sewage Treatment Plants** – To discourage development outside of targeted development areas, consider amending the county policy on private sewage treatment plants. Consider allowing private sewage treatment facilities only in targeted development areas where public sewer service is not available or planned.

2. Establish Future Capital Improvement Priorities

Camden County will work with local utilities, economic developers, and planners to establish priorities for capital improvements.

- * **Establish Priorities for Future Public Sewer Service** – Formally establish priorities for future public sewer service; potential priorities include:
 - o Country Club area wastewater extension on US 158 (from Upton westward)
 - o Camden Business Park wastewater expansion on US 158 (east of Gumberry)
 - o Eco-Industrial Park additional water wells
 - o South Mills core village wastewater extension (providing full service to area)

3. Seek out Public-Private Partnerships for Utility Projects

Camden County will seek to maximize public-private partnerships to fund the expansion of the utility systems that will be needed by new development, and do so with an eye toward identifying opportunities to leverage those efforts to connect existing communities to that infrastructure. This is particularly needed in areas where wastewater collection and treatment systems need to be established to relieve failing septic systems. Continued utilization of available grant programs should also be continually pursued.

4. Establish Formal Policies for Evaluating Utility Allocation

As water and wastewater capacities are finite without the expansion of systems, Camden County will develop formal policies for evaluating and making decisions on utility allocation; possible allocation policies could include priority for potential economic generation, priority for larger projects of a certain size, or first-come-first-serve.

Action Strategies

- * **Work with Utilities to Develop Allocation Policies** - Work with South Mills Water Association (SMWA) and South Camden Water and Sewer Authority (SCWSA) to coordinate efforts to develop formal policies for allocation of public water and sanitary sewer capacity that balances economic development and land use goals

5. Develop Plan to Address Ongoing Septic Systems Failures

Camden County will develop a long-term strategy for addressing ongoing septic system failures occurring throughout the county. Possible solutions include enhancing standards for development of new septic systems, extension of public wastewater to failing systems, and development of smaller package treatment plants in strategic locations.

6. Identify Opportunities to Implement the Camden County Water and Sewer Master Plan

Continue to identify potential opportunities to implement the *Camden County Water and Sewer Master Plan*. Of particular consideration is the recommendation for three separate water and sewer service areas, provision of wastewater treatment facility in Camden, and future treatment trains needed at the South Camden Wastewater Treatment Plant in South Mills.

STORMWATER OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to Monitor Status of NPDES Phase 2 Compliance

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is a program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that is administered in North Carolina by the North Carolina Division of Water Quality. Camden County will continue to monitor whether the county has met certain thresholds and will be required to meet the six minimum control measures set forth in permits under NPDES Phase 2.

2. Consider Establishment of a Stormwater Utility

As targeted development occurs in Camden County, more urban and conventional systems to capture and treat stormwater runoff may be required, and necessitate allocation of funding for development of stormwater infrastructure and ongoing maintenance. The upfront cost and implementation of stormwater infrastructure should be carried by the development community, but that will not address the needs of long term maintenance. One possible solution to address the need for staff and resources for the ongoing management of stormwater infrastructure could be through the establishment of a stormwater utility. This could be established through a three-pronged approach:

- * Increase and maintain hydraulic capacity of drainage system through establishment of entities such as drainage districts with dedicated revenue streams for management (e.g., stormwater utility)
- * Restrict new development outside of targeted development areas to very low densities to minimize increases in stormwater runoff
- * Implement stringent stormwater detention requirements to ensure that stormwater volumes leaving developed sites do not overwhelm the existing drainage capacity

3. Acquire Public Easement for Maintenance of Drainage Swales

Camden County will set out a process for acquiring easements for drainage swales on private property to ensure proper maintenance of drainage areas.

PUBLIC SAFETY OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to Provide High Quality Public Safety Services

Camden County will continue to provide high quality public safety services to county residents in a manner that seeks to balance the goals to provide adequate service and to strive for fiscal efficiency.

2. Replace the South Camden Fire Station

Continue to seek out funding opportunities to replace the South Camden Fire Station.

3. Explore Opportunities to Provide Full-Time EMS in Camden

Continue to work with EMS partners to identify opportunities to provide full-time emergency management services in Camden County.

EDUCATION OBJECTIVE

1. Continue to Provide a High Quality Public Education

Camden County will continue to provide a high quality public education experience to the county's student population. Funding of educational programs will continue to be a high priority for the county.

NEXT STEPS

The next step will be to present this report and the draft Future Land Use Plan map to the Steering Committee on April 3. At that meeting, planners will guide the committee through a discussion of the draft plan framework and identify any necessary adjustments. The committee will also discuss implementation priorities to assist in development of the implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Following this meeting, planners will make adjustments as agreed to by the Steering Committee and prepare materials to present this information at a public workshop to be held in early to mid-May 2012. The goal is to have a final Comprehensive Plan ready for the formal public review process by June 2012.